

# INSPECTION REPORT

**QUINTIN KYNASTON SCHOOL**

LEA area: Westminster

Unique reference number: 101149

Headteacher: Jo Shuter

Lead inspector: Clare Gillies

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2004

Inspection number: 268886

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of students:	11 -18
Gender of students:	Mixed
Number on roll;	1363
School address:	Marlborough Hill London
Postcode:	NW8 0NL
Telephone number:	020 7722 8141
Fax number:	020 7586 8473
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Patrick Lees
Date of previous inspection:	February 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Quintin Kynaston School has been a Specialist Technology College since September 2001. In 2001, 2002 and 2003, the school received a School Achievement Award and was on the DfES list of most improved schools. The school has significantly increased in size since the last inspection. It is now larger than average – the sixth form has nearly 300 students. Boys outnumber girls, particularly in Years 8 and 11. About one in four students is White, one in four is either Black African or Bangladeshi and smaller percentages from many ethnic minority groups complete the school's multicultural population. One in five students is a refugee or asylum seeker. Over 50 languages, predominantly Arabic, Albanian and Bengali are represented in the school and about one in ten students is at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of students with special educational needs is above average although the percentage of those students with a statement is average. Support is mainly for pupils' moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural needs.

A well above average percentage of students receives free school meals. A much higher than average number of students enter the school after Year 7 or leave before Year 11. Pockets of high quality housing surround the school but students come from a wide area covering many London boroughs. Analysis of the housing and population statistics of the districts where students live confirms that many come from deprived areas where, for example, the child poverty index is high, housing is overcrowded or many adults are unemployed. Standards on entry are below average. Every day the school offers an on-site Youth Club and once a month it opens a drop-in One Stop Shop where students and parents receive advice and support. In September 2003, the school was accepted as a pilot Extended School. Working with neighbouring primary schools and the school's community, Quintin Kynaston intends, within a decade, to be open most days of the year offering education, leisure activities, healthcare and social support to all ages.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20597	Clare Gillies	Lead inspector	Work related learning
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector	
4351	Jeanne Strickland	Team inspector	<b>English</b>
4359	Wiola Hola	Team inspector	Mathematics
32955	Gillian Joyner	Team inspector	Science
4607	David Ward	Team inspector	<b>Biology</b>
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Art and design
2971	Kathleen Hooper	Team inspector	<b>Design and technology</b>
8240	Elaine Dearmer	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
33018	Angela Read	Team inspector	Geography, leisure and recreation
21822	Helen Maskew	Team inspector	History, government and politics. Special educational needs
4426	Terry Fitchett	Team inspector	French
32805	Richard Churches	Team inspector	Music, drama, <b>media studies</b>
18888	Jan Boulton	Team inspector	<b>Physical education</b>
27226	Richard Cribb	Team inspector	Religious education, Personal, social and health education
20324	Vera Morris	Team inspector	Business studies, economics
18125	Vanessa Rowe	Team inspector	<b>Psychology</b> , sociology
1246	Michael Fitzgerald	Team inspector	English as an additional language

**Bold** indicates the sixth form subjects inspected in depth.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school is very effective.** Students achieve well and standards are average in many subjects by the end of Year 11. Teaching is good overall with several examples of excellent practice. The headteacher's leadership is excellent and leadership and management overall are very good. The school provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The wealth of cultures and faiths in the school is valued, respected and appreciated by all teachers and students. The racial harmony and very good relationships give the school a special character and contribute to its very good ethos.
- The headteacher's dynamic, keen and determined leadership is the main reason the school has improved so much in the last eight terms.
- The school supports students' academic and personal development extremely well and the quality of care is excellent.
- GCSE examination results have improved every year since the last inspection.
- Despite significant developments in the last two months, students with a limited grasp of English do not receive enough well-focused support.
- Teaching is very good or excellent in one third of lessons. In many lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and make the work interesting and fun.
- Statutory requirements are not met for a daily act of collective worship, for religious education in Years 10 to 13 and for information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 10 and 11.
- Although fully supported by the local education authority, reducing the school's very large budget deficit will require, as the governors state, "skill and rigour".
- Year 11 results in ICT have been low for the last three years. Leadership and management of ICT courses in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form are unsatisfactory.

The school's effectiveness has improved significantly since its last inspection: the school has grown and now has a large sixth form; standards, especially girls', have gone up; attendance is now above average; the percentage of at least very good teaching has tripled; and data analysis is sharper and used well to challenge students to achieve higher standards. Changes to the management of support for students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language have not been in place long enough to improve the support these students receive but the signs are encouraging.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance compared with:		all schools			similar schools
		2002	2003	2004	2004
Year 11	GCSE/GNVQ examinations	E	D	D	B
Year 13	A/AS level and VCE examinations	E	D	n/a	

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.  
For Year 11, similar schools are those whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

**Overall achievement is good in all years and in the sixth form. Standards are average in all years and in the sixth form.**

**Year 9 national tests** - the 2003 average points score for English, mathematics and science together was below the national average. The results in 2004 were similar in science, better in mathematics but slightly lower in English. In these years, the significant percentage of students who speak English as an additional language lowers overall results. Present standards in Years 7 to 9 are below average in design and technology, history and music and average in all other subjects.

**GCSE:** the percentage of students attaining five A\*-C grades has risen practically every year since the last inspection - from 16 per cent in 1998 to 47 per cent in 2004. In 2004, the average points score went up and all students attained at least one GCSE grade A\*-G. English, mathematics and science results were close to the national average in 2004. Students do well in English literature, resistant materials, in their first languages and in GNVQ examinations. Present standards in Years 10 and 11 are below average in design and technology, history and ICT. They are above average in art and design and average in all other subjects.

**Sixth form:** the percentage of students gaining pass grades was just below the national average in 2003; it went up considerably in 2004. Girls attained a much higher average points score than boys in 2003. A-level results in 2003 were average in English, ICT and other languages, above average in art and design and media studies, and well above average in biology. In 2004, the results improved in biology and media studies and also in design and technology, mathematics and physics.

**Students' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.** Students have a very strong understanding of right and wrong. Students' attitudes and behaviour are good. Students are made very aware of their responsibilities to behave well and they respond by generating a positive respect for different cultures, faiths and beliefs. Attendance is above average and punctuality is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching and learning is good.** Teaching has improved since the last inspection. Examples of excellent practice were seen in all years. In some subjects, teachers use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively and effectively. Teaching in ICT and for students who speak little English is not always effective. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is good in the sixth form, with an increasing range of vocational courses. Provision for students' care, welfare and health and safety is excellent, with some exemplary procedures in place. Students receive very good support, advice and guidance. Students who come to the school from outside the United Kingdom (UK) are welcomed and settle in quickly. The school's partnership with parents is good and its partnership with the community and other schools is very good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management overall are very good.** The headteacher's leadership is excellent and driving the school forward. She is very well supported by a large, strong leadership team and by heads of departments and pastoral heads, who work hard to raise standards at the same time as focusing on supporting all pupils. Management is very good and most efficient. The work of the governing body is good. Members bring a valuable range of expertise to their work. They are fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and that statutory requirements are not met in all areas.

## **PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and students are very satisfied with the school. Students are proud to be members of the community. Almost nine out of ten students feel that they are taught well and parents are equally positive.

## IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

### The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- persevere with all initiatives to improve the support given to students for whom English is not their first language;
- improve leadership and management of ICT to raise standards and results in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form;

### and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that an act of collective worship happens every day in all tutor groups; and
- teach religious education in Years 10 to 13 and ICT to all students in Years 10 and 11.

<b>THE SIXTH FORM</b>
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## OVERALL EVALUATION

**The overall effectiveness of the sixth form is very good.** Now part of an increasingly successful consortium, students can choose from a wide range of vocational and academic subjects. The sixth form is very well led and managed and it now has close to 300 students, the majority of whom achieves the grades they require to move on to higher and further education. Its cost-effectiveness is good.

### The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Students get on very well together and respect each other's cultural and religious backgrounds.
- Students feel confident that they are taught well. During the inspection teaching was at least very good in two out of five lessons.
- Results in media studies are well above average.
- Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship are not met.
- Students are encouraged to stay on in the sixth form from the main school and they, and new entrants, receive excellent care and very good support and guidance to help them achieve their best.

## QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES OF THE CURRICULUM

Judgements about the provision in the subjects and courses inspected in the sixth form are shown below. They are based mainly on the quality of teaching and learning and how well students achieve. Not all subjects in the sixth form were inspected.

Curriculum area	Evaluation
English languages and communication	<b>English - good provision.</b> Average standards. Good achievement. Good teaching and learning. Very good leadership and management. An increasingly popular course with imaginative teaching.
Mathematics	<b>Mathematics - good provision.</b> Average standards. Good achievement. Good teaching and learning. Good leadership and management. Flexible courses and teaching which matches students' individual abilities.
Science	<b>Biology - very good provision.</b> Above average standards. Good achievement. Very good teaching and learning. Very good leadership and good management. Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively.
Information and communication technology	<b>ICT - unsatisfactory provision.</b> Below average standards. Unsatisfactory achievement. Unsatisfactory teaching and learning over the whole course although satisfactory in lessons. Unsatisfactory leadership and management.

Humanities	<b>Psychology - satisfactory provision.</b> Average standards. Good achievement. Satisfactory teaching and learning. Unsatisfactory leadership and management. A newly appointed, enthusiastic, specialist teacher.
Engineering, technology and manufacturing	<b>Technology - satisfactory provision.</b> Below average standards. Satisfactory achievement. Good teaching and learning. Good leadership and satisfactory management. Students' understanding of design techniques is limited.
Visual and performing arts and media	<b>Media Studies - excellent provision.</b> Very high standards. Exceptional achievement. Excellent teaching and learning. Excellent leadership and very good management. A popular subject with some inspiring teaching.
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel	<b>Physical education - very good provision.</b> Above average standards. Good achievement. Good teaching and learning. Very good leadership and management. A new, valuable, vocational BTEC course has got off to a very good start.
Business	<b>Business studies - very good provision.</b> Average standards. Good achievement. Very good teaching and good learning. Excellent leadership and management. Rising standards and a good range of courses.

*The curriculum areas are broadly common across all post-16 education and training. They do not necessarily correspond with subjects and courses taught by the school. Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. Excellent and very good are equivalent to the judgement 'outstanding' in further education and sixth form college reports; poor and very poor are equivalent to 'very weak'.*

## ADVICE, GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Advice, guidance and support for students are very good. Sixth form students interviewed during the inspection confirmed that the guidance they receive on further study or careers is of good quality and that staff do listen to their views and opinions. The school makes sure that students learn about the world of work and further education. The school has very good arrangements for sixth formers, if they wish, to receive pastoral advice; they can use any of the support systems in place in the main school. Whether entering the sixth form from the main school or elsewhere, the high quality arrangements mean that all students settle in quickly and soon make progress with their work. The consortium arrangement works well and staff go to great lengths to ensure that they monitor students' attendance, academic progress and pastoral needs effectively. The heads of Years 12 and 13 receive feedback on students' achievement from subject teachers every half term and check their progress and performance carefully.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SIXTH FORM

Leadership and management are very good. The sixth form is very well organised and has the same positive and supportive ethos as that found in the main school. Many students speak about the confidence they have gained in the sixth form and how they are following courses that match their interests and abilities. Those with limited English are supported well, some for three years, so they can move on to higher education with the right qualifications.

The heads of Years 12 and 13 lead these two years very well and keep a careful eye on each student's progress. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are delighted that the sixth form has grown and now has close to 300 students. They value it as an integral part of the whole school and have worked hard to successfully strengthen its provision. In several subjects the teaching groups are large and consideration of their effectiveness will be required in the future.

## STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SIXTH FORM

Students are extremely positive about their life in the sixth form and speak with pride about how much the school has improved in the last two years. They are most supportive of the headteacher and know that she, the leadership team and all members of staff, do everything possible to advise and prepare them for their future options in education, training or work. Refugees feel welcome and valued and they, and others with English as an additional language, become articulate and confident learners. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, several students wrote about how well they are taught and how much they value the school's multi-cultural population. Over 90 per cent of students feel it is a good school to be at.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

**Space** is the term used by the school for lessons which cover students' social, personal and cultural education. This course includes careers and citizenship in all years, and religious education in Years 10 and 11 and in the sixth form.

**Year 7 Pilot Curriculum** English, history, geography and religious education are taught by the same teacher.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards overall are average in the main school and in the sixth form. Achievement overall is good in the main school and in the sixth form. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Overall girls and boys achieve similarly although students who speak little English do not progress fast enough.

The term *similar schools* relates to all other schools where students, entering Year 7 or beginning their GCSE or sixth form courses, had the same overall standards as Quintin Kynaston students. VGCSE means the new vocational examinations, worth two GCSEs, taken for the first time in 2004 in art, business and ICT. AVCE is the vocational equivalent of one or two A-levels. 2004 national results for mathematics and science at the end of Year 9 and some GCSE statistics were available during the inspection.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Compared with similar schools, in 2004 students made at least satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science in Years 7 to 9.
- The percentage of students attaining five GCSE grades A\*-C has improved considerably since the last inspection. In 2004, all students attained at least one A\*-G grade.
- Achievement is well above average in Years 10 and 11 compared with similar schools.
- Students who speak little English do not progress fast enough.
- The percentage of students gaining A-level and AVCE passes was just below the national average in 2003. It improved in 2004, as did the percentage of students attaining the highest grades of A or B.

#### Commentary

1. Students enter the school with below average standards, particularly in reading. In the end of Year 9 national tests in 2003, the combined average points score for English, mathematics and science was below the national average; students achieved less well than those in similar schools. In 2004, the results were similar in science, better in mathematics but slightly lower in English. In these years, the significant percentage of students who speak English as an additional language has an impact on standards.
2. Nevertheless, in 2003 the percentage of students reaching the expected level, level 5 and above in English, mathematics and science reflected satisfactory achievement during Years 7 to 9 and the same is confirmed for mathematics and science in 2004. Students find it difficult to attain the higher level, level 6, in English. In 2004 almost half did so in mathematics and just under one-third in science, a significant improvement and very close to the national average in both subjects. The good teaching in Years 7 to 9 bears fruit in Years 10 and 11.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2004*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.3 (31.3)	--- (33.4)
mathematics	33.9 (33,3)	--- (35.4)
science	31.2 (31.5)	--- (33.6)

*There were 210 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. Practically every year since the last inspection, the percentage of students attaining five or more grades A\*-C in the GCSE examinations has risen, from 16 per cent in 1998 to 47 per cent in 2004. The percentage of students attaining five or more grades A\*-C was close to the national average in 2003, although the average points score

was below average. Results in 2004 would have been higher if those for the VGCSE in information and communication technology (ICT) had been better - only six per cent of students attained an A\*-C grade. Nevertheless, for the first time in 2004, all students attained at least one grade A\*-G and the percentage of students attaining five or more grades A\*-G, including English and mathematics, went over the 90 per cent mark. The points score also went up.

***Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2004***

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	47 (47)	53.4 (52)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	92 (88)	88.6 (91)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	100 (95)	95.8 (96)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	33.2 (31.5)	282.3 (34.7)

*There were 209 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year. The points score calculations changed in 2004 to include approved qualifications as well as GCSEs and GNVQs.*

4. Compared with similar schools, the average point score for students' best eight GCSE results were above average in 2003 and the percentage attaining five or more grades A\*-C was well above average in 2004. The table below shows that in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the results were close to the national averages. Compared to similar schools, these results show very good achievement in these three subjects in Years 10 and 11. Students perform extremely well in English literature and in their first languages. In GNVQ examinations, 70 per cent of students succeeded in science, 45 cent in business; the leisure and tourism results have been queried.

**GCSE RESULTS 2003 AND 2004 (PERCENTAGE WITH GRADES A\*-C)**

	2003	National 2004	2004	Comments
English language	55	60	54	In 2003, results in English literature (taken by all students) and French (taken by a small minority) were above the national average; both were higher in 2004. Students who take GCSE in their first (other) language attain a high percentage of A*/A grades. In design and technology, results in resistant materials, the most popular option, are above the national average, those in food, graphics and textiles are lower and fluctuate each year.
English literature	67	64	69	
Mathematics	58	53	48	
Science (double)	41	54	44	
Art (fine)	54	68	44	
French	48	52	52	
Other languages	87	77	93	
Geography	41	62	49	
History	48	64	46	
Drama	60	65 (2003)	58	
Music	53	69	0	
Food	35		0	

Graphics	38	All DT subjects 54	18
Resistant materials	58		67
Textiles	48		20
Statistics	44	66 (2003)	100
Business double	N/A	N/A	53
Art and design double	N/A	N/A	62
ICT double	N/A	N/A	6

5. In 2004, boys and girls attained very similar grades in English language, mathematics, science, art (fine), geography, history and drama. As nationally, girls do better than boys, particularly in English language, the school is focusing on raising girls' achievement. In French, boys did not perform nearly as well as girls but boys did much better in VGCSE business. Students who enter the school after Year 7 do not do as well as students who have been in the school for five years.
6. Students with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in improving their reading and writing. External agencies and support groups in school help these students to achieve well. There is very good support for the youngest, most vulnerable and challenging students. The school provides very good resources and staffing to improve their behaviour, and to guarantee their full inclusion into the mainstream classes in Year 8.
7. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to other students and generally achieve well. The achievement of students with English as an additional language varies. Those who are fluent in English do well, but those who speak little English do not achieve as well as they should because of unsatisfactory teaching. The school population varies each year and analysis of performance by ethnic groups is not reliable as the ethnicity of a significant percentage of students is not recorded. Monitoring of results by ethnicity indicates that some white UK students underachieve.
8. The table overleaf summarises the standards of work and levels of achievement seen during the inspection. The headteacher and senior leadership team are alert to those subjects where standards are below average. In design and technology, the different subjects are now taught by specialists, a more suitable GCSE course is being followed in ICT and support to improve students' essay writing in history is in place.

	Years 7 to 9		Years 10 and 11	
	Standards	Achievement	Standards	Achievement
English	Average	Good	Average	Very good
Mathematics	Average	Good	Average	Satisfactory
Science	Average	Good	Average	Good
Art	Average	Satisfactory	Above average	Good
Design and technology	Below average	Good	Below average	Satisfactory
Geography	Average	Good	Average	Good
History	Below average	Good	Below average	Good
French	Average	Good	Average	Good
ICT	Average	Satisfactory	Below average	Unsatisfactory
Music	Below average	Good	Average	Good
Physical education	Average	Good	Average	Good
Religious education	Average	Good	Average	Satisfactory
Citizenship	Average	Good	Average	Satisfactory

### Sixth form

9. The percentage of students gaining pass grades at the end of the sixth form was just below the national average in 2003. It went up considerably in 2004. Girls attained a much higher average points score than boys in 2003. Until September 2004, the number of students taking courses in the sixth form was small, with often fewer than ten students per subject. More than ten students took examinations in business studies, English, ICT and media studies in 2004. Compared with national figures, the A-level results in 2003 were average in English, ICT and other languages, above average in art and design and media studies and well above average in biology. Results in 2004 improved in biology and media studies and also in design and technology, mathematics and physics.

### *Standards in GCE A/AS level and VCE examinations at the end of Year 13 in 2003*

	School results	National results
Percentage of entries gaining A-E grades	96.3 (88.8)	--- (89.4)
Percentage of entries gaining A-B grades	29 (21.1)	--- (32.6)
Average point score per student	215 (212.0)	--- (258.2)

*There were 45 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

10. The focus during the inspection was on nine subjects and all other subjects were sampled. Standards of work were very high in media studies, above average in physical education and biology, average in English, mathematics, psychology and business studies and below average in ICT and technology. Students achieve exceptionally well in media studies, well in English, mathematics, biology, psychology, physical education and business studies, satisfactorily in technology, and unsatisfactorily in ICT.

### Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Students' attitudes and behaviour are good overall. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students have a very strong understanding of right and wrong.
- Students are made very aware of their responsibilities to behave well and they respond by generating a positive respect for all cultures, faiths and beliefs.
- Attendance is good and has improved year on year since the previous inspection.
- Students know that the school does not tolerate any bullying or racism.
- The school does not meet the statutory requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship.

- The celebration of Black History Month during the inspection made an exceptionally strong contribution to students' spiritual, cultural and social development.

**Commentary**

11. Students enjoy their work and their achievements. Staff are extremely supportive and have very good relationships with students. In most lessons, students are enthusiastic and get on well together. Prior to the inspection, a student wrote, "The lessons go fast and we learn most of the time", a view echoed by many others. Several students in Year 7 observed that the teachers were "kind, helpful and teaching them well". Students interviewed during the inspection were equally positive. The school has a wealth of students with differing cultures, beliefs and religions but it is a strikingly happy and well-balanced community, where all students integrate and get on well together in a harmonious and calm atmosphere.
12. The school sets very high expectations for students' conduct and works hard to achieve them. Behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, is good. There is very little litter and no graffiti. Students have contributed to the behaviour policy, which they understand well; staff apply it consistently. Bullying and racism are not tolerated and any incidents are dealt with promptly and firmly. Most students with English as an additional language are keen to learn; they work hard. The same is true for students with special educational needs. They are cheerful and confident that they are getting the right support to improve their reading or numeracy skills, or to help them control their behaviour.

**Attendance**

13. Attendance at 93.7 per cent is above the national average and is improving year-on-year. This is largely because the school is pro-active in monitoring, promoting and rewarding attendance. Most parents are contacted on the first day of absence and students who do not attend are vigorously pursued by staff and by the school-based education welfare officer.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) National data is for 2002 to 2003**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	1.8
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

14. There were 127 fixed term exclusions but only three permanent exclusions during the last school year. This is a reduction on previous years. In recent years, it has been Year 10 boys who have been excluded - most effective systems are now in place to help them stay focused and behave well. All exclusions have been correctly recorded and scrupulously monitored by staff.

**Ethnic background of students**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	178	25	1
White – Irish	7	1	0
White – any other White background	155	10	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	47	9	0
Mixed – White and Black African	22	4	0

Mixed – White and Asian	14	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	63	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	12	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	30	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	167	5	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	44	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	57	18	1
Black or Black British – African	171	18	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	38	6	0
Chinese	9	0	0
Any other ethnic group	259	29	0
No ethnic group recorded	90	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of students excluded.*

15. The school encourages students to take on responsibilities and show initiative - many do willingly and help at school events. In the year and school councils, students debate matters of school interest and communicate their ideas to senior staff. The councils successfully promote social events, sports tournaments and the behaviour policy. Students in Years 10 and 11 can apply to train as counsellors, peer mentors or buddies; the latter work with students in Year 7 when they first arrive to help them settle in. Year 7 students appreciate this. Most students join in the many charitable events that the school promotes, for example, *Jeans for Genes* day on the last day of the inspection. Students do not participate in large numbers in extra-curricular activities, partly because some of them have long journeys home. Those who attend the Youth Club much appreciate this new attraction, which functions daily until 7pm.
16. During the inspection, in the evening show celebrating Black History Month, students gave several moving performances that the audience found spiritually uplifting. These talented and inspiring musicians, singers and speakers also performed in assemblies so that all students could reflect on and celebrate the ethnic diversity of the school. The school is sensitive to the demands students face during Ramadan, providing Muslim students with a room for prayer. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, it was striking how many students wrote that they appreciate mixing with students of many different faiths.
17. Nevertheless, overall provision for spiritual development is only satisfactory. Opportunities for reflection and exploration of the spiritual dimensions of life are often missed in lessons, especially in mathematics, science, geography and ICT. With too little time to cover the locally agreed syllabus for religious education in Years 10 and 11, students do not debate and consider spiritual issues very often.
18. The school has successfully established a very strong moral framework, which emphasises valuing the contribution of all to the multicultural, diverse community. Students develop a very mature approach to their responsibilities and acquire maturity and sensitivity as they progress through the school. Most subjects provide opportunities to help students understand the moral issues that confront society. The students' attitudes of care for one another and towards fair play in physical education are particularly noteworthy. Opportunities for social development are good, particularly through extra-curricular activities and the Youth Club. In the latter, several Year 11 students support younger students and Year 6 students from the local primary school also attend.
19. Students' sensitivity and awareness of multicultural issues is excellent. The diversity of the student population is celebrated very well in many subjects and is particularly strong in religious education, modern foreign languages, art and design and music. The good number of GCSE modern foreign languages offered is also highly commendable. The respect students have for others' beliefs and traditions permeates school life and is reflected in their support for education in Africa. Two Year 11 students gave a most thoughtful talk to the inspection team on the issues facing students who are fasting during Ramadan. The sensitivity of non-Islamic staff and students towards the needs of others is very high. The only limitation on this excellent awareness is the limited use that is made of London's cultural heritage in the curriculum.
20. The school has set up systems to meet its statutory duty to provide a daily act of collective worship. With many faith groups in school, approval for worship to represent them all equally has been granted. Assemblies are very well organised and students benefit by reflecting on moral issues and celebrating their multicultural heritage. The provision of Friday prayers for Muslim students, led by a teacher, is very good, but similar arrangements for other

faiths are not developed. The inconsistent delivery of the 'thought for the day' in form time means that when they do not have assembly, there is no collective worship for a significant number of students.

### **Sixth form**

21. Students are mostly extremely positive about their courses, the quality of teaching and how much they appreciate "the atmosphere and the sense of togetherness". In the main, they complete course work and assignments promptly. Students have an excellent rapport with their tutors because their tutors take time and trouble to offer them guidance, help and encouragement. Students are good role models and set a good example for younger students, whom they help and encourage by acting as mentors, prefects and buddies. They are fully involved in the school council and play a key role in the running of the school.
22. Students' mature and sensitive approach to younger students and their commitment to their own studies show that they have very clear understanding of their responsibilities. Social opportunities are good and include competitive sports and a variety of trips and activities related to specific subjects, like the theatre trips for students in drama and English. Students are fully aware of their multicultural differences and respect them. The school's link with teachers and pupils from Lavenda Springs in Kenya has prompted several charity fund raising activities, including a pyjama day. However, sixth form students do miss out on many aspects of London's rich cultural heritage.
23. Sixth form assemblies provide students with the chance to reflect upon key issues that impact on their lives. Occasionally, as in a very good drama lesson on Ibsen's *The Doll's House*, students experience moments of deep spirituality. With too few lessons to cover the locally agreed syllabus, students' knowledge and understanding of religion and ethics is not strengthened enough. Although many students have a strong personal faith upon which to base their values, collective worship or reflection through the 'thought for the week' programme does not happen regularly in tutor time.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is good.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good in the main school and in the sixth form. The quality of assessment of students' work is good in the main school and in the sixth form.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In all years, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection.
- In almost a third of lessons, the teaching was at least very good. Examples of excellent practice were seen in English, media studies, science and religious education.
- In many of the successful lessons, it is the teachers' enthusiasm that encourages students to be interested and to learn well.
- The small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching is predominantly related to behaviour and inadequate teaching for students at an early stage of learning English.
- Students with very limited fluency in English do not progress fast enough.

### Commentary

24. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and the percentage of very good teaching has tripled in the school as a whole. In Years 7 to 11, in approximately half or more of the lessons, teaching was at least very good in English, art and design, media studies and physical education. Teaching in science in Years 7 to 9 and physical education in Years 10 and 11 was weak at the time of the last inspection but it is now good in both subjects. Almost nine out of ten students feel that they are taught well and parents are equally positive.
25. The school has welcomed 13 newly-qualified teachers this term. All their lessons are well planned and some very good teaching occurs in a few of their lessons. Many of them have already established very strong relationships with the students they teach. Teaching in the Year 7 pilot curriculum lessons was predominantly good, although the teachers clearly feel more confident teaching lessons related to their subject specialisms. The small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was mainly in lessons covered by supply teachers and/or those where either students' behaviour was poor or students with limited English did not receive the support they needed.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 216 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
10 (4.5%)	58 (26.5%)	73 (34%)	62 (29%)	13 (6%)	0	0

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

26. The fundamental ethos of the school, emphasising tolerance and respect for all, underpins and enhances students' self-confidence as learners, whatever their ethnic background. This builds up their self-esteem and contributes very well to the way in which they achieve and make progress. The range of ethnic backgrounds amongst the staff also provides good role models for students.
27. The teaching of students with English as an additional language who speak fluent English is frequently good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. For those students who have limited English, the overall quality of teaching provided by the specialist support teachers is unsatisfactory; these students are not improving their grasp of English fast enough, an issue that was highlighted during the last inspection. Although most of the support teaching now takes place in normal lessons, the specialist teachers and assistants lack expertise to work in this way and do not liaise enough with subject teachers. Students do not always get the right help, particularly with their writing, so they cannot consolidate what they learn orally. Where the teaching was sound in specialist lessons, which was not always the case, materials to support writing were used well.
28. The teaching of students with special educational needs is satisfactory, although occasionally teachers do not recognise their specific needs, so they do not use the most relevant materials, resources or teaching approaches. This is because teachers are not always certain of the targets in the students' individual education plans, some of which are too complex. The work of learning support assistants in lessons is mostly satisfactory; when they are most effective, teachers have informed them fully about their role and the level and type of support they are expected to provide.

29. In many lessons, a dominant feature was the way many teachers conveyed their genuine enthusiasm for their subjects and for teaching, which students were quick to sense. Teachers never speak down to students and the mutual respect found in practically all classes generates an excellent ambience for learning. Highlights seen during the inspection include:
- English lessons, where teachers knew the play or novel so well that they were able to open doors for students' imagination and thinking;
  - science lessons, where the variety of activities was stimulating and misconceptions were quickly sorted;
  - energy and enthusiasm right to the end of a double media studies lesson. Students used the interactive whiteboard to display DVD extracts for sitcom analysis and then understood sophisticated concepts of political correctness; and
  - a low ability group in Year 7 being skilfully guided through a difficult religious education topic. Students were coerced into listening to each other and their misbehaviour was dealt with firmly and effectively. The teacher got the very best from the students.
30. In some lessons, teachers use interactive whiteboards merely to project information. Where teachers have confidence in their skills, they use them creatively. In music, the interactive pen was used to record a students' ideas session and then DVD extracts were presented for discussion. In French, students thoroughly enjoyed using the interactive whiteboard to learn about colours. As the school has Specialist Technology status, it is surprising that many of the whiteboards have only been installed recently; teachers have not had long enough to learn how to use them really well.
31. The analysis of students' performance data by gender is completed centrally and is of good quality. Students' work is assessed against their targets, and then remedial action is initiated when necessary. Half-termly assessments are being trialled, but as yet have to be fully evaluated. Students are fully aware of their current National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades and targets for improvement. Departments analyse their own data, some by teaching group, where it is used to highlight strengths and areas for improvement.
32. In media studies, performance data is used extremely well to generate individual intervention strategies. There is very good data analysis in geography and also in physical education where, in student friendly language, descriptions of work at different levels and grades are displayed. In drama, students master how to assess their own work well. In English, analysis of assessment data is excellent. In music and design and technology, teachers have assessed work against National Curriculum levels too generously, with the opposite happening in art and design in Years 7 to 9. In ICT, teachers tend to set over-ambitious targets.
33. This term, a good start has been made in assessing all students to identify their levels of fluency in English to establish a base line for the school. However, the identification of the needs of pupils with English as an additional language is not yet accurate enough, particularly the decisions made about fluency levels at the early stages. On occasion, students are placed on a lower fluency stage because of their overall learning difficulties, particularly in reading and writing, rather than in relation to their command of English. The special educational needs department does not collate data on these students' progress as a discrete group, to make a comparison with other students' progress. Identification of these students is accurate and, following assessment, the right support systems are put in place.

#### **Sixth form**

34. At the time of the last inspection, the majority of teaching was good in the sixth form. It is now very good in two out of five lessons and examples of excellent teaching and learning were seen in English, business studies, ICT and media studies. The single lesson when teaching was unsatisfactory was caused by lack of support and preparation for a lesson covered by a supply teacher.
35. In the sixth form, several teachers use the interactive whiteboards well. This was particularly noted in the sciences, sociology, business studies and media studies. The results of class experiments in science are put on the school's Intranet so students can incorporate them into their reports, set up spreadsheets and use them to plot graphs; this is excellent practice. Mathematics teachers frequently pose questions that both check understanding and make students think for themselves. Science teachers prepare helpful materials for students with English as an additional language.
36. A key factor in students' learning is how well they develop their skills and confidence to study independently. In English, art and sociology, teachers encourage students to prepare and research work for presentations, which they do well. In music technology, students master how to use the sophisticated equipment on their own. Drama students gain in confidence performing plays and creating thought-provoking scenes in drama. Working in small groups to plan activities, sports studies students have to master leadership skills. Students' independent learning is not so well

developed in technology or psychology and teachers do not consistently develop students' prediction and hypothesising skills in mathematics.

37. In several successful lessons, it was the unusual and imaginative approach to learning that helped students to achieve. For example, jazz music to create mood in an English lesson, role-play in geography to simulate countries' financial management or a business meeting in leisure and tourism. Stimulating projects, linked with music, psychedelic art and fashion, generate much high quality work from art students.
38. In one excellent English lesson on Howard's End, students discussed the social and political implications of the novel in a mature manner. English teachers use quality vocabulary and expect students to do the same. In an imaginative ICT lesson, having been given very helpful guidance by the teacher, students themselves had to prepare a lesson and then review each other's efforts. The teacher asked probing questions and students learned well from each other. In business studies, the teacher's clear, logically-ordered explanations propelled students forward, and, with increasingly difficult questions, a potentially dry topic came alive. Studying humour and stereotypes through critical theory analysis in media studies, students were shown how to use the interactive whiteboard imaginatively and they made rapid progress.
39. A recently-introduced commercial package provides the school with A-level and AVCE grade predictions as well as analysis of past results in great detail. It relates students' predicted grades and performance to national data. All departments, some more effectively than others, are using this data to target strengths and weaknesses, and to promote good practice. Students' work is assessed accurately and constructively in most courses. Three out of four students feel their work is assessed helpfully and they know what to do to improve it.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and good in the sixth form. Opportunities for enrichment, including extra-curricular activities, are good. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Year 7 curriculum is innovative.
- The sixth form open access policy is of significant benefit to refugees and students with English as an additional language.
- The extended day provides additional opportunities for the wider school community.
- Participation in extra-curricular activities is relatively low.
- Statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship, religious education and ICT in Years 10 and 11 are not met.

### Commentary

40. When students transfer to the school in Year 7, they are taught English and humanities by the same teacher, often their form tutor, which means they have nine lessons together. This successful arrangement was introduced three years ago to make the transition from primary school as smooth as possible. A group of students in Year 7 with special educational needs achieve very well as they are taught in a small class and receive more individual attention. All students learn French. No other modern foreign language is offered during the day but in after-school classes, students, of any age, can prepare for GCSE and A-level examinations in their first language. The former restricts the curriculum but the latter, acknowledging the students' linguistic talents, is excellent.
41. The present system, whereby students in Years 10 and 11 have three days of intensive ICT work, is not giving those who do not take GCSE enough time to meet statutory requirements. This is a temporary arrangement and the headteacher hopes to rectify the situation in the next academic year. With religious education subsumed within the SPACE programme, too few lessons cover the locally agreed syllabus so statutory requirements for religious education are not met. Despite these breaches of statutory requirements, the curriculum is satisfactory in all years with reasonable breadth and balance.
42. Careers education, addressed mainly through the SPACE programme, is good. In the autumn term, all students in Year 11 attend a careers morning entitled "Staying in Learning". An analysis of last year's event confirmed that students learned much about post-16 options and how to understand their links with training and work. Other responses revealed students' career interests, not all of which were represented by outside speakers. The co-ordinator for careers rightly observes that such information must not only feed into the next event but also into the school's curriculum plans for the sixth form curriculum, which is very good practice. Further input into students' preparation for future learning and employment comes through the programme for work related learning.
43. The number and range of extra-curricular activities is less than expected for a school of this size. Students do not participate as much as the school would like, despite some very good activities in subjects such as drama, physical education and music. Public performances take place regularly and these add much to the school's ethos. Students can attend extended school activities, such as the youth club. Enrichment beyond the classroom is strong in history, where students take part in a range of trips, and worthwhile activities take place in science and geography.
44. The Black History Month evening performance (see paragraph 16) included singing, solo instruments, ensembles, dance and poetry reading. The evening presented positive role models and was an inspiring and moving expression of the school community's solidarity and commitment to inclusion. One student commented, "For one month, we get to be on the top shelf – that's not enough, but it's all right for now" and another that "Black History Month makes me proud to be Black."
45. The school has wisely decided that most of the support for students with English as an additional language will be provided in normal lessons. However, some support teachers and assistants work in too many subjects and with too many teachers. They have very limited knowledge or understanding of how English is used in different subjects. Thus, curriculum support is not strong enough for students with limited English, who need to make rapid progress. In Year 11, these students can attend a support group instead of one GCSE subject, although no decision has been taken on what qualification they will take. In addition to the Year 7 group mentioned in paragraph 40, students with special educational needs use helpful computer software to improve their reading, comprehension and numeracy, and receive well-planned lessons in small groups when necessary.

46. The long-overdue major refurbishment and improvements to health and safety over the last two years, for example, rewiring the whole site, have contributed significantly to the school's large financial deficit. As a result, accommodation, especially the health and safety aspects, has improved significantly since the last inspection, although several large areas wait to be refurbished or developed. The reception area, canteen, physical education office and computer rooms are now excellent. Rooms for music, which lack sound-proofing, and art and design are unsatisfactory. The spacious library has two computer rooms and a careers office, but it is not lively or stimulating and the book stock is low. There are many indoor spaces for physical education but no playing fields. In many subjects, rooms are too small for the number of students, thus hampering group work.
47. Despite having Specialist Technology status, it has taken several years for the school to have a reasonable number of computers and an efficient network. This has only happened in the last couple of years and is another reason why the financial deficit has grown. At present:
- Seventy per cent of classrooms have interactive whiteboards, many of which were installed only weeks before the inspection;
  - every faculty has access to one or more clusters of computers;
  - modern resources, such as digital cameras, are available for shared use but not used widely; and
  - the school has an excellent website and its Intranet is already contributing to students' learning (see paragraph 123).
48. The new site manager has had a very positive impact on improving the accommodation. His refurbishment plans are well established. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory overall, but there are not enough specialist teachers in science, geography, ICT or religious education. Art and design, music and biology do not have enough resources. The excellent number of computers in the school considerably helps students' learning. The attractive suite of rooms to support students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language functions well. Resources for English as an additional language are poor, with too few subject-specific books and none where the level of language difficulty has been simplified to match differing fluency levels in English.

#### **Sixth form**

49. In recent years, more girls chose science subjects and more boys chose business courses. With far more students in Year 12, these patterns have not continued. In the present Year 12, media studies is the single most popular subject, although numbers taking business or ICT courses, mathematics, biology and chemistry are strong. BTEC sports studies and A-level economics were introduced in 2004 to support students' interests and aspirations. Other subjects, such as government and politics, sociology, music technology, media studies and drama, already cater for students' wide-ranging interests.
50. The curriculum is good, with a range of courses offered at different levels: A-level, AS, AVCE, BTEC and GNVQ. Several students take home language qualifications, well supported by the modern foreign languages department. Students have open access to courses and this policy benefits the many students who arrive from overseas. It has, occasionally, meant that students have started courses that they found too difficult, but science and mathematics, particularly, do not wish to dissuade enthusiasm. So, in mathematics, students can take two years to cover the AS work.
51. The sixth form curriculum does not yet offer many courses at a lower standard than A-level and the headteacher is keen to see a further expansion of vocational qualifications. Nevertheless, consortium arrangements are working well and about ten students in Year 12 have combined courses in more than one institution. The flexible approach to students' choices is commendable. Every year, a few students stay on for a third year, having improved their English to A-level where they can tackle A-level work. Others may stay for one year, gaining the qualifications they need to move on to further education. The school works hard to arrange courses which match students' abilities, fluency in English and interests.
52. Sixth form students use the same rooms as the main school but there is no teaching base for their lessons in physics and art and design. The latter restricts the amount of time students can spend on their art work outside of their lessons. The large sixth form common room, including a computer suite, is sparse and not particularly welcoming, although most students are pleased to have their own space. Many of them use the library during free lessons but the books on offer are not up-to-date or numerous enough to help their independent studies.

#### **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for students' care, welfare and safety is excellent. The school provides very good support, advice and guidance for students. The school seeks to involve students very well in its work and development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The child protection procedures are excellent.
- Procedures to ensure students work in a healthy and safe environment are excellent
- Whether moving from primary school, joining in a later year, or arriving as a refugee, possibly with limited English, the school does everything possible to welcome students and make them feel valued.
- Whatever their social, academic or behavioural problems, students needing extra support receive the best possible attention.

## Commentary

53. The school's child protection policy is relevant, up-to-date and fully complies with legislation. The child protection co-ordinator performs her role with professionalism and sensitivity. She attends training events regularly, passes on essential information to all staff and is fully up-to-date with recent legislation. Records on the child protection register of looked after students are exemplary. Very good liaison is maintained with the relevant agencies as needed.
54. Every day, the premises officer carries out a daily safety check of the buildings and grounds. Health and safety audits are carried out at regular intervals and any defects are properly recorded and rectified immediately. Risk assessments of a high standard are carried out in all departments. The school has the correct number of first aiders and has a well-equipped first aid room. All accidents are recorded meticulously. The school is very well maintained and mostly provides a clean and cheerful environment for the students to work in.
55. The school is skilful in using the information it collects and observes about students' academic and pastoral needs, interpreting it well to target support and help where it is needed. At all levels of management, students' academic work is monitored thoroughly so that any underachievement is addressed by specific support and action. Some students come from backgrounds where life is difficult and challenging, and experience difficulties with social and emotional issues. These students are extremely well supported and the school's pastoral team makes very good use of several specialist agencies to support their welfare. Support groups for students with particular needs work very well. The newly set up learning support unit, learning mentors and resident social worker all contribute most effectively to supporting students in need of help and advice.
56. The school has a very good, well-structured entry programme, and a video, made by students, is shown to all Year 6 primary pupils. Practically all students in Year 7 feel confident and happy and many, before and during the inspection, stated that there is nothing they would want to change, commenting "the school is perfect". Students in Years 10 and 11 help those in Year 7 to settle in. Arrangements for students with English as an additional language and/or those who are new to the school are good. Many students, particularly in the sixth form, who are refugees describe how quickly they felt part of the school.
57. The school proactively involves students through seeking, valuing and acting on their views. Students are proud to be elected members of their form and school councils, both of which meet regularly. Both councils are developing a high profile, which is important as there are still students who do not appreciate what the councils have achieved. Many students acknowledge that teachers and other adults in the school do care about their welfare and appreciate the support they receive. Some can articulate how the school has kept them on the rails during difficult times in their lives. One student observed that "the headteacher never gives up on you".
58. The school has good procedures for identifying, assessing and supporting students with special educational needs. Regular reviews of students' progress are held but individual education plans contain too many targets for improvement. Currently, the special educational needs department does not meet the requirement to provide transition plans nor, for some students at the end of Years 9 and 11, does it make careers advisers available for annual reviews. Arrangements for assessing the academic needs of students with English as an additional language are described in paragraph 33.
59. The school has adopted an effective multi-disciplinary approach. Regular meetings are held between the head of learning support unit, the special educational needs and English as an additional language co-ordinators, the inclusion manager, social worker and representatives of outside agencies. The latter include the Hungerford Drug Project, Brook Advisory Service and the Psychotherapy Service, all of whom combine their expertise to ensure that students receive high quality assistance. The school actively encourages students to consider others –raising money for local charities, including Children in Need, Looked After Children in the Community and Comic Relief Day.
60. The overall arrangements for ensuring that students from minority ethnic backgrounds are cared for and supported are similar to the arrangements made for all students and are very good. The race equality policy is put into practice.

Teachers are sensitive to the needs of students from differing backgrounds. Through individual tracking, links between students' underachievement and behaviour and attendance are identified and mentoring arrangements introduced as necessary.

### **Sixth form**

61. Students in the sixth form receive the same high quality support, advice and guidance as those in the main school. Sixth formers interviewed during the inspection confirmed that they felt the guidance they received on further study or careers was of good quality and that staff did listen to their views and opinions. Students benefit from a careers adviser being based full-time at the school; very good opportunities are provided for them to learn about the world of further education or work.
62. The school has very good arrangements for sixth formers to receive pastoral advice, if needed. Students entering directly into the sixth form, either from other schools or from abroad, confirm that, as a result of the high quality arrangements, they settled in quickly and soon made progress with their work. The consortium arrangement works well and staff go to great lengths to ensure that students' attendance, academic progress and pastoral needs are monitored effectively.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's partnership with parents is good. The school's partnership with the community is very good, as are the school's links with other schools and colleges.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school provides helpful information to parents.
- The school has good procedures to deal with parents' concerns or complaints.
- Educational links with other schools and colleges are very good.
- The school is closely involved in the local community in a wide range of initiatives.

### **Commentary**

63. Parents are most positive about the school, reflected in the fact that it is now over-subscribed. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire believe that their children like school, make good progress and are taught well. They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. Parents believe the school is well led and that it helps their children to become mature and responsible. The inspection confirms all these positive views.
64. The school keeps parents fully informed about their children's progress. The high quality, annual reports contain clear information about students' grades and achievement, as well as information about what students have learned and studied in all subjects. The school arranges two days a year for parents to discuss their children's progress with form tutors and a further day when parents can see subject teachers, learning support assistants or special educational needs teachers on a one-to-one basis. Numerous other days or evening meetings are offered, where information and decisions are shared. Parents of students with learning or behaviour difficulties are invited to discuss possible study options and types of support. Parents who do not speak English well are offered translators.
65. The well-presented and clear school prospectus gives much information about the school, its aims and ethos. An interesting weekly letter gives up-to-date information about school activities, staff information and students' achievements. Student planners provide a most effective means of communication between home and school. The school also contacts parents by letter or telephone if they have any concerns and cards are sent home to parents to celebrate students' achievements.
66. Courses are offered for parents to develop their parenting skills, and to learn ICT. The school regularly surveys parents to obtain their views and produces the results in three languages. A number of parents help in school, giving support via the Marlborough Family Centre. They help with literacy, school productions and in the promotion of cultural evenings. The headteacher and senior managers keep a visible presence at the school gates every day and parents know they can approach staff immediately if they have any cause for concern. A particularly successful innovation is the weekly Multi-Family Parents' Group, where parents discuss their children's specific behaviour problems together, with support workers from the Marlborough Family Service. Parents say that the support and help they receive is invaluable.
67. A few local residents express dissatisfaction with the school's communication with them, or with the students' behaviour, but the inspection does not support their views. The school is extremely pro-active in involving the

community in its activities and allowing the community to use its premises - an over-40s basketball team, two local orchestras, a martial arts group and dancing classes, to name but a few. With the Westminster Adult Education Institute, the school plans to provide teachers for adult education in ICT, dancing, Spanish and acting.

68. A monthly One-Stop Shop provides advice for students, parents and the community on housing benefit, adult education and domestic violence. The local community is regularly invited to attend school events and local people, such as proprietors of businesses, magistrates, members of the Hungerford Drug and Teenage Pregnancy Project or the Women's Refuge, come into school to talk to students about their life experiences. Local businesses provide work experience places for students. The school works hard to strengthen its links with the community.
69. To develop links with feeder primary schools further, four community post holders have been appointed in design and technology, ICT, science and mathematics. Teachers of these subjects, and physical education, already teach and provide advice in primary schools, and primary school pupils attend lessons in Quintin Kynaston. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 take part in lessons planned and taught by sixth form students as part of the community sports project. One day a week, teachers from Quintin Kynaston work in the local school for pupils with learning difficulties, helping to develop their ICT skills. Students from a referral unit take part in food technology and science lessons, and an advanced skills teacher visits the unit to teach textiles. All the local education authority schools are part of the sixth form consortium.
70. The school has received extended school status from October 2003 from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The funding has been used to employ a youth manager for the youth club on site. In addition to the One Stop Shop, the school is converting an old school house into a nursery, which is planned to open in 2005. The school has appointed a co-ordinator to lead a healthy school's initiative, and family literacy groups will be set up for students and parents to develop their literacy skills. These developments are imaginative and planned well.
71. Good strategies are used for communication with parents from minority ethnic backgrounds who may not be fluent in English. There are good links with outside agencies on matters relating to students who may come from refugee and or asylum seeking backgrounds. An annual event celebrating the ethnic diversity in the school in food, music and culture is very well attended.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management overall, including the sixth form, are very good. The work of the governing body is good. The school gives good value for money and the cost-effectiveness of the sixth form is good. The school's large deficit will limit innovation in the next few years but will not impede its determination to raise standards further. Statutory requirements for the daily act of collective worship, religious education in Years 10 to 13 and ICT in Years 10 and 11 are not met.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher's leadership is excellent. She is supported by a very good senior leadership team.
- Leadership and management of the sixth form are very good. The heads of Years 12 and 13 know the students very well and monitor their progress effectively and sensitively.
- The culture of respect for all ethnic, race and faith groups pervades the atmosphere of the school and generates the school's special atmosphere.

### **Commentary**

72. In just eight terms, the headteacher has achieved a remarkable change in the school. Numerous students, parents and several local residents commented on this. She has made significant changes in staffing, improved teaching and learning, raised standards, introduced an attractive and comfortable uniform, organised the successful refurbishment of many areas, improved behaviour, generated a Quintin Kynaston (QK) culture and made the students proud to attend the school. The QK culture is epitomised in the most effective display of the simple logo around the school, along with exciting panels from a large picture which the staff created. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good.
73. The senior management team has a good mix of ages, experience and backgrounds so that all members, in different ways, are excellent role models for students. They set the tone for how teachers interact with students – respectfully, kindly and realistically. The headteacher shrewdly plays to their strengths so that their roles complement their skills and they lead and manage very well. The headteacher knows her teaching staff extremely well and is fully aware of the few areas where leadership and management or teaching are not sharp enough.

74. The headteacher provides a clear principled commitment to making provision as good as possible for students from all ethnic backgrounds, particularly refugees and asylum seekers. Tolerance and respect for all is central to the ethos of the school. Action is taken to address underachievement where it is identified. This approach permeates the school and students recognise that they are valued. The school states that it will try to meet its QK philosophy statement by being (from a longer list) inspirational, creative, sensitive, fair and consistent. There is much evidence that its efforts are strong and determined and appreciated by the students. The headteacher, quoted in a local resident's magazine, knows that "once they trust you, they'll climb mountains for you".
75. The governing body works well and is particularly effective in shaping the direction of the school and challenging the headteacher and senior leadership team on its actions. The governors have a wealth of business, public health and education experience which they bring to their deliberations. Governors with particular responsibilities for child protection, health and safety or special educational needs, for example, are in close contact with the relevant managers in the school and perform these roles very well. Governors are fully aware of the statutory requirements that the school does not meet: the daily act of collective worship, religious education in Years 10 to 13 and ICT in Years 10 and 11.
76. The chair of governors is astute and keeps a sharp eye on the school's plans for the extended provision, its finances and possible change of status in the future. He, and all members of the school community, are keen that the school considers students' development "beyond the focus of lessons, to channel adolescent energy into a wider range of productive pursuits". The plans in place for the extended school reflect this worthwhile ambition.
77. Performance management is fully in place and is increasingly effective at all levels. The objectives of individual senior managers and teachers feed into those for the whole school, for example, increasing staying on rates into the sixth form or focusing on work-related learning. Student teachers are welcomed in the school, as are those from overseas. All staff receive well-considered professional development, linked to their own needs and to those of the whole school.
78. The newly-appointed co-ordinator is providing clear leadership for work with students who have English as an additional language, particularly in ensuring that arrangements for new students are well organised, establishing a baseline for the students' English fluency and clarifying how support teachers may best be deployed. The management and monitoring of this work, however, is not yet satisfactory as there has been too little time for these systems to work effectively. Job descriptions have not been finalised and the arrangements for professional development, particularly on collaborative and/or partnership teaching, are not yet tight enough.
79. The newly-appointed, very experienced special educational needs co-ordinator has a clear view of how the department can be improved and is providing innovative strategies to bring this about. For example, her first priority was to ensure that all students with a statement receive their full entitlement to support and resources. She has made the inclusion area of the school attractive and welcoming and generated an excellent atmosphere of encouragement and support.
80. The headteacher and senior leadership team keep a very close eye on standards and performance. They carry out rigorous analysis of examination results and act to address any weaknesses. For example, the headteacher is working closely with the ICT department to improve leadership and management and raise standards. Regularly, heads of departments and the very competent heads of year report on students' performance and pastoral needs to the headteacher and senior leadership team. If needed, support for individual students is arranged. The school development plan confirms that the school evaluates its work realistically.
81. Overall, the school provides good value for money. Financial management is good and best value principles are applied soundly. The deficit to March 2004 (see paragraphs 46 and 47) has been fully supported by the local education authority, which has agreed a programme to repayment over a three-year period. This will require, as the governors state, "skill and rigour"; it relies mainly on increased funding to be provided by the increased numbers. Funds for the extended school activities are not separated from the main sources of income but are included in the general school's budget. This does not allow the school to evaluate successfully the efficiency of the extended school's programme. An internal audit, carried out on behalf of the local education authority in June 2004, identified that nine out of 12 areas requiring improvement following a previous report had been carried out, with only three minor recommendations outstanding.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	5,851,121	Balance from previous year	- 895,601

Total expenditure	5,981,052
Expenditure per student	4,600

Balance carried forward to the next year	- 1,026,000

### Sixth form

82. The sixth form is very well organised and has the same positive and supportive ethos as that found in the main school. Many students speak about the confidence they have gained in the sixth form and how they are following courses that match their interests and abilities. Those with limited English are supported to stay for three years so they can move on to higher education with the right qualifications. The heads of Years 12 and 13 lead these two years very well and keep a careful eye on each student's progress. After the first few weeks of Year 12, students are interviewed and careful checks are made to be sure that they have chosen the right courses. The heads of Years 12 and 13 receive feedback on students' achievement from subject teachers every half term.
83. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are delighted that the sixth form has grown and now has close to 300 students. They value it as an integral part of the whole school and have worked hard to strengthen its provision by:
- broadening the curriculum at Quintin Kynaston and through the consortium;
  - improving the quality of careers advice with, for example, an "Aim Higher" day;
  - interpreting data intelligently to give students realistic, yet challenging, targets;
  - encouraging students to be responsible and co-operative - "catching them doing things right"; and
  - praising their achievements with certificates for academic excellence or high attendance.
84. Financial management of the sixth form is as efficient as that in the main school. The increased funds this year, with the larger number of students, will help the school to offset its large deficit. Nevertheless, in several subjects, the teaching groups are large and consideration of their effectiveness will be required in the future. The cost effectiveness of the sixth form is good.

### WORK RELATED LEARNING

**The effectiveness of the school's provision for work related learning (WRL) is satisfactory.**

85. GNVQ science and VGCSE in art and design and business in Years 10 and 11 and the BTEC sports studies course, AVCE ICT and several A-level subjects are important curriculum choices which support students who are clear where their future work interests lie. A significant number of sixth form students take the three sciences for A-level and then study engineering at university. Through the consortium, sixth form students can combine vocational courses at other institutions with those at the school.
86. In addition to a practical and well-considered plan for improvement, a thorough analysis of how subjects contribute to students' understanding of the world of work was completed in September 2004. Although it reveals areas where the input is relatively weak, it has raised teachers' awareness of this aspect of students' development. The geography department has a key question related to work for every unit of study whereas the history department does not. Other subjects, such as media studies and business studies, are used to addressing work issues.
87. Students who wish to become involved in the world of work in Years 10 and 11 study English and mathematics in school, spend two or three days training in work placements and a few attend college as well. Ten students in Year 11 are following such a programme, working in a variety of areas such as health, mechanics, hotels and beauty. An experienced learning support assistant is closely involved and visits all students regularly. Most students will take a qualification in basic work skills and receive teaching for this in school. The school is keen to see more students able to benefit from apprenticeship schemes although the local area is not rich in such opportunities.
88. Year 10 students already undertake two weeks' valuable work experience which is very well organised. In addition, over half the students in Year 11 choose to have one week's work shadowing. The school plans to have a "Real Game" team building exercise for all Year 10 students in the summer term. Local firms will visit the school to demonstrate production skills related to resistant materials and then students in Years 10 and 11 will teach these skills to younger students. The good careers programme (see paragraph 42) clearly contributes much to students' awareness of the world of work.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

##### English

Provision in English is **very good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and very well in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11	Learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11
Leadership is very good	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The GCSE examination results have improved steadily. The English literature results are above the national average.
- Teaching is good overall and particularly effective in Years 10 and 11, where some excellent lessons were seen.
- Teachers are keen to evaluate and improve their work.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- Students respond eagerly to good teaching and want to do well.

##### Commentary

89. Over the past four years, the Year 9 test results have fluctuated, but remained below the national average. Students enter the school with standards that are at least below average and a very high proportion do not speak English as their home language. The results in Year 9 represent good achievement, as well as improvement since the last inspection. The language factor affects performance in English tests more than in mathematics and science, and more students reach Level 6 in the latter two subjects.
90. The school has a good and improving record in GCSE examinations. An outstanding feature is the very high entry rate, above that seen nationally, particularly in literature. The English language results are close to the national average. In English literature, students attained above the national average percentage of grades A\*-C and A\*-G in 2003 and the results improved in 2004. Boys' achievement is particularly good.
91. Standards of writing in Years 7 to 9 are variable – in the 2004 national tests, they were close to the national average recorded in the previous year. Teachers use the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy creatively and build well on work done in primary years. There are good examples of imaginative writing, especially poetry, but limited evidence that students are asked to produce longer pieces and hand them in for regular marking. In their reading, which is of an average standard overall, students learn to recognise genre, which is introduced in Year 7 and developed through novels and stories in Years 8 and 9.
92. However, some lessons are planned so tightly that students have no time to reflect on their own reading preferences or to discuss them with the teacher. Where there are too many tasks and not enough discussion, students usually respond cooperatively but without the eagerness seen in the most effective lessons. In these, lively interaction and enjoyment contribute to above average standards of speaking and listening and very good learning. Coming out of one such lesson, students were heard saying: "That was *really* good!". The challenge now in Years 7 to 9 is to bring all the teaching up to this high standard and there is no lack of enthusiasm or commitment to achieving this.
93. Pleasure in the work, shared by teachers and students, was a striking feature of many GCSE lessons and accounted for the very high quality of much of the teaching and learning at this stage. In an excellent Year 10 lesson on Miller's *A View from the Bridge*, the teacher gave just enough of her own views on a character to start students thinking and talking about implications and subtleties of meaning. In another good lesson on the same play, the teacher took the role of the central character in a 'hot seating' exercise which required students to ask questions and discuss conclusions. In several very good classes in Year 11, students judged their own and each other's essays and

analysed and compared extracts, showing good practice. Valuable explorations of language and literature in class are reflected in thoughtful and increasingly confident essays and notes.

94. Throughout the school, students are taught English successfully in mixed ability classes. In all years, teachers are careful to ensure that the needs of all students are met, although until recently, they have not always been given enough information about the students who speak English as an additional language. These students, and those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well.
95. The new head of faculty inherited a well-run department, with good systems for assessing students' work. She is very effectively leading a team of experienced teachers who provide models of good practice, and newcomers whose energy and ideas are already contributing much. Communication with the teachers in other departments who share the Year 7 pilot curriculum is well managed. Since the last inspection, standards have gone up and teaching has improved. The department is now targeting raising standards further in Years 7 to 9 and developing a wider range of activities outside lessons.

### Language and literacy across the curriculum

96. The management of literacy across the curriculum presents particular challenges as students speak over 50 different home languages. Some enter the school with very little English, and levels of literacy in their home languages also vary. A number of good programmes and initiatives meet the needs of newcomers, students with special educational needs, and students of all nationalities who have very low reading ages. Very good work was seen in Year 8 and Year 9 reading booster groups. However, until recently, limited information and assessment of students with English as an additional language made it difficult for teachers to plan for them, particularly in English lessons. The situation is improving this year.
97. Overall, the school's policy for literacy across the curriculum is carried out effectively. The recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy has been implemented well across all subjects. Valuable staff training has been carried out with the support of a literacy consultant. In most subjects, there are good features of literacy development, except in ICT, where the poor GCSE examination results are in some measure due to unsatisfactory written explanations, and in history, where weak reading and writing affect progress in the subject. Overall, however, students' literacy skills are good enough for them to cope with their work in all subjects.
98. In general, key words are being well used and displayed in most subjects, with art and design and physical education using them particularly effectively. Writing in science benefits from very good use of the recommendations of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, and teachers also encourage wide reading and talking in this subject. In geography, teachers develop more extended writing, but opportunities for this are still too limited in religious education.
99. The school encourages students to feel confident about expressing their views and to be respectful listening to what others say. In drama lessons, students talk and improvise well, although their ability to discuss and evaluate their work is weaker. Students have to justify and explain their conclusions in mathematics, but longer contributions were heard only in the best lessons. There is good oral work in art and design, where teachers extend students' answers by open-ended questions, and discussions. Physical education teachers encourage students to describe their performances. Good discussions happen in science and citizenship. Teachers make students listen carefully in modern foreign language lessons. In religious education debates, students listen to each other's views attentively.

### French

Provision in French is **good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and has some very good features.
- Standards have improved overall with above average GCSE results.
- Students make good progress and achieve well.
- Management and leadership of the faculty are strong.

- Insufficiently regular use of ICT to help students to learn.
- Students do not have enough confidence to speak French without prompting.

**Commentary**

100. By the end of Year 9, standards are broadly in line with the national average, although students’ speaking skills are slightly weaker. Standards have improved as a result of staffing stability, better teaching and a tighter structure for lessons. Students’ comprehension is good and their written work is usually accurate. By the end of Year 9, most students use tenses correctly. Beginners in Year 7, including students with special educational needs, make good progress and many speak well, better than expected for their age, because of teachers’ emphasis on building up oral skills. Teachers use mime and gestures very well to make lessons memorable and enjoyable.
101. The percentage of students attaining grades A\*-C in the GCSE examination has been above average for the last three years. Students in Years 10 and 11 make good progress, particularly in their understanding of the language and in their writing. They write accurately and some write at length. Their speaking is hesitant and less well developed because they tend to rely too much on teachers’ prompts or the textbook; they rarely give long answers, use French spontaneously, initiate conversation in French or make the effort to pronounce it correctly.
102. In the best lessons, a crisp start and clear explanation of what is to be studied mean that students are immediately attentive, and the teachers’ regular use of French for instructions helps students’ comprehension. In a lesson with lower ability students in Year 7, the teacher’s very good use of the interactive whiteboard introduced a sense of fun because students went up to the board to answer questions and explore new language about colours.
103. The key features of the best lessons are careful planning, bold visual presentations and an interesting range of activities which involve students. Teachers use games to practise new vocabulary and grammar cards for sentence construction. Where lessons are less effective, teachers use too much English and do not use a variety of resources. Students are usually very attentive, coping well with instructions in French. They collaborate well in group activities and most of them are very positive about learning French.
104. Teachers mark work regularly and their comments show students how to improve. The head of faculty is very well organised. She has created a coherent team which shares ideas and resources, and is well aware of the teachers’ strengths, through formal monitoring and frequent, informal discussions. She is a strong and supportive role model to her colleagues and is determined to extend the profile of languages in the school. Since the last inspection, both the quality of teaching and standards have improved.

**MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory	

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising in Years 7 to 9.
- Most teachers have very good subject knowledge and team work in the department is good.
- Students learn new mathematical techniques well but do not routinely apply them in relevant, real-life contexts.
- Teachers assess standards accurately.
- Problem-solving skills are not fostered well enough.
- The use of ICT is limited.

**Commentary**

105. Results in the end of Year 9 tests in 2003 were below the national average and below that for similar schools. An average proportion of Year 9 students reached Level 5 in 2003, but a lower than average proportion reached the higher levels. The results in 2004 improved at both levels. Girls improved more than boys and gained more higher

grades. Results have gone up since 1999 because the department has taken actions for improvement in a thoughtful and carefully targeted way. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were above the national average; those in 2004 dropped, more than was expected. The department has put in place further strategies to be sure that all students attain their target grades. In 2004, 14 students, who had already obtained high grades in GCSE mathematics in Year 10, took GCSE statistics; all obtained grades A\*-C.

106. Standards are broadly average, although the range of attainment is wide. Higher-attaining students have good numeracy skills and, when asked, they can explain their methods and ideas clearly; they use mathematical vocabulary well and perform mental calculations accurately. Some lower-attaining students have lower than expected numeracy skills for their ages and take longer than they should to perform simple calculations; teachers have not taken full account of the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy for raising basic skills. Students generally work well with whole numbers; they do not practise using fractions and decimals enough.
107. Achievement is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11 because the department has paid greater attention to improving provision in these years; the focus is now on Years 10 and 11. Students develop their mathematical knowledge and techniques well because teachers foster these methodically. Students' achievement is not quite so good in predicting, hypothesising, justifying and selecting an appropriate method for problem solving because, too often, teachers miss opportunities to include these in lessons, except in the best ones. Good teaching and setting arrangements generally ensure that work and support are provided to match each student's needs.
108. All lessons are planned carefully so that students learn techniques well and methodically; rarely, however, are these skills presented or used in real-life contexts. In the best lessons, teachers generate interest and enthusiasm because they pose challenging questions which make students think hard; students enjoy this and concentrate very well. In other lessons, learning is dutiful and secure but not inspiring, because teaching methods are not imaginative, with no interesting resources. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well but so far students do not. Computers are used occasionally. Assessment is mostly good so that students are clear about how well they are doing. Lesson endings are not used as well as other parts of lessons to assess how much students have learned. Marking and discussions in class help students to understand how to improve.

#### Mathematics across the curriculum

109. Students' competence in, and use of, mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory. Most students have the necessary numeracy skills to cope with the mathematical demands in other subjects. Students draw and interpret charts and graphs and they are given help in other subjects, as necessary. A geography teacher covered concentric circles and sectors of circles in a Year 10 geography lesson when students were unsure of these terms. The school does not currently have a member of staff responsible for developing its work to promote mathematics across the curriculum but an appointment is imminent. The school recognises the need to ensure a greater coherence of approach to raising further students' overall skills in numeracy.

#### SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is excellent	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been very good	

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is at least good because the teachers plan interesting lessons which contain a wide variety of activities.
- Students who have English as an additional language are very well catered for, with special activities written for them in most lessons.
- The head of faculty is an excellent leader and has a clear vision of what he wants to achieve.
- A much higher percentage of boys than girls gain the top grades in GCSE examinations.
- The turnover of science teachers has been high and this has had an impact on standards, particularly at GCSE.

#### Commentary

110. Students come into the school with below average standards. The results in the Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations have improved significantly in the last five years. Achievement compared to similar schools is just below average by the end of Year 9 but it is well above average in Years 10 and 11, despite the GCSE results overall being below average. In 2004, the percentage of girls who gained a grade C or above was almost the same as that of the boys, but the percentage of boys achieving the highest grades of A\* and A was double that of girls.
111. In Year 7, most students find it difficult to write about their work, although they can talk about what they know. Teachers give students keywords, scrambled words and dictionary sheets to help them build up their scientific vocabulary and improve their spelling. In Years 10 and 11, most students are well on the way to learning independently. They follow carefully constructed worksheets with teachers rarely having to intervene. They are becoming skilled at researching and summarising material on the Internet. In a Year 10 lesson on designing presentations about “Smoking and respiratory disorders”, the teacher set up groups very carefully to suit the students’ abilities. The most able students made presentations on emphysema for an adult audience, the least able on bronchitis for students in Year 7.
112. Teachers are enthusiastic and students respond very well. The best lessons are carefully structured with time for students to practise what they have learned, before moving on. Teachers regroup students effectively for different activities. In a Year 9 lesson on acid rain and producing a report for a youth conference, groups of students assigned themselves different roles quickly and co-operatively. The faculty produces very good analyses of test and examination results and uses them to set targets and match teachers to the curriculum.
113. A special grant is being used to train teachers and to provide support for students in Year 9 who are at an early stage of learning English. An impressive number of methods are being used. All rooms have key words relating to the current topic on display, and students in the early stages of learning English are paired with a “buddy” to help them. This work is very effective.
114. The recently-appointed head of faculty has achieved a great deal in his first year. He and the other key staff are observant and perceptive, anticipating potential problems and taking action. The faculty’s team spirit is a major strength, contributing greatly to high staff morale and improvements; both these were lacking in the past. The high staff turnover in recent years lowered students’ confidence; staffing is now stable.
115. The very good accommodation includes eight interactive whiteboards and two computer suites. Whiteboards are used in every lesson but some teachers are much more skilful; they should share their good practice. The science Intranet is very impressive, with areas to drop in and pick up work and, for some lessons, pages where students can find links to other information. Results of experiments are put onto the Intranet so that students can manipulate data and use them in their reports. Teachers prepare special worksheets to guide students of different abilities when researching the Internet; this is excellent practice. Three very dedicated technicians work extra hours to support the teachers and make sure that everything runs smoothly. In the last inspection, standards were poor in all years - they are now satisfactory. Achievement and teaching have also improved.

#### INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Standards are average in Years 7 to 9 and below average in Years 10 and 11	Students achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactorily in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11	Learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11
Leadership is unsatisfactory	Management is unsatisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory	

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Examination results have been poor for the last three years. Students do not achieve well enough in Years 10 and 11.
- The increased number of computers means that students do not have to share them.
- The Internet is used well to encourage independent learning in Years 10 and 11.
- Leadership and management lack determination, focus and organisation.

## **Commentary**

116. Standards are average in Years 7 to 9, where the use of the recommendations of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy over the last three years has improved the students' work. This is reflected in a good range of ICT activities, for example, planning for a screen presentation, "All About Me", and an investigation into sensors and their role in measuring the environment. Teachers encourage students to produce well-written documents and to present them with care. They also provide helpful comments which guide students to make better progress. Most students have good keyboard skills.
117. The GCSE examination results have been poor for the last three years and students have not achieved well enough. A different course was followed each year. In 2004, only six per cent of students gained grades A\*-C in a double GCSE course. In addition to the leadership issues described below, particular factors contributing to the 2004 results are that not enough time was allowed for students to cover the double course and students' progress was disrupted by several changes of teachers.
118. Teachers plan lessons well, particularly in Years 7 to 9. Students enjoy answering questions and teachers ensure that they all join in. Students know what the learning objectives are for lessons and, if asked, can determine if they have met them. Lesson plans show that the needs of students with special educational needs and those at an early stage of learning English are considered thoughtfully; for some of them, teachers prepare different work. Mostly, they manage to do the same work as others.
119. Teaching in lessons is satisfactory in all years but other elements make it unsatisfactory overall in Years 10 and 11. Most students use computers confidently but in GCSE classes they spend too little time learning the fundamentals. Students do not have enough deep knowledge and understanding about how ICT systems work nor how they can be used effectively in particular contexts. Samples of coursework indicate that students' judgements about the use of ICT are weak. During the inspection, there was little evidence that assessment is thorough and meticulous enough to develop sound learning. If students get stuck in lessons, they lose valuable time waiting for help; their research is not rigorous or accurate enough.
120. Leadership of the department is unsatisfactory because three different syllabuses in three years have not produced standards of an acceptable level. The organisation of ICT in Years 10 and 11 has lacked focus and the necessary drive to make teaching effective. Coursework has not been managed well and early signs of underachievement have been ignored. Now that a more suitable, single GCSE is in place for Years 10 and 11, standards are rising. Until the department has tackled its weak examination performance, the headteacher has, understandably, determined all students in Years 10 and 11 will have three whole days of computer work during the year rather than weekly lessons. For those students who have not chosen ICT for GCSE, this provision does not meet statutory requirements.
121. The tight budget has held back the purchase of resources such as scanners and digital cameras. There are sites on the Intranet that teachers and students can use to translate computer terms into a variety of languages; this is good practice. Since the last inspection, the number of computers has improved, a new network has been installed, on-line resources introduced and interactive whiteboards fitted in all rooms. The latter were not used imaginatively during the inspection. Although standards have remained average in Years 7 to 9 in the last three years, they have deteriorated significantly in Years 10 and 11. The introduction of a more suitable course for GCSE students has the potential to raise standards.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

122. Students have sound enough basic ICT skills to use them effectively in most subjects. A recent audit shows that in Years 7 to 9, ICT is mostly used for word processing and research. In Years 10 and 11, there is evidence of plans for a broad range of ICT activities. In a few subjects, teachers and/or students use computers effectively, for a wide variety of activities. In music, the learning of students in Years 10 and 11 is developed very well when they use MIDI sequencing software. In art, painting packages are used imaginatively. Students generate descriptive writing in

geography and history, manipulate data in geography and design and technology, use interactive whiteboards with enthusiasm and enjoyment, and frequently prepare coursework using ICT.

123. The school has an excellent website that provides much detailed information about the school's history, its courses, examination results and past students' reflections. Each subject area provides specific information for both students and parents, and good links make it very user-friendly for non-specialists. The school also operates a well-established Intranet that is confidently used by teachers and students to present information; it provides links to sources of information which help students to study independently.

## HUMANITIES

### Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11	Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Detailed planning and high quality visual aids underpin structured, interesting lessons that result in students achieving well.
- Thorough marking means students know exactly what their standard is and how to improve.
- Enthusiastic, knowledgeable teaching keeps up the pace and challenge of learning.
- Progress in lessons is too variable, depending on how well teaching methods deal with students' misbehaviour and learning needs.

### Commentary

124. Teachers assessed standards by Year 9 as being below average in 2003. There was significant improvement in 2004 when more than two-thirds of students attained the nationally expected level. The GCSE examination results in 2003 were well below average; boys did much better than girls. The results in 2004 improved; almost 50 per cent of students attained grades A\*-C and girls did as well as boys.
125. On entry to Year 7, students' attainment is below average. Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 because lessons always have active introductions, main tasks and then a whole-class review at the end. This structure results in purposeful and productive learning. Students learn to present balanced comments on local issues, for example, writing a letter to local councillors about a proposed quarry development in Year 9. High attainers write fluently, using relevant facts to support their opinions. Students in Year 11 use their geographical knowledge and understanding to investigate case studies. When teaching allows for different learning styles, achievement is very good and attainment is high. For example, students in Year 10 discussed London from personal experience, referred to theory, and then constructed three-dimensional models of an urban landscape.
126. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Geography specialists teach very good teaching because brisk starter activities involve everyone and give an initial buzz to learning. Eye-catching photographs, maps and text are presented on the interactive whiteboard or in laminated hard copies to keep students interested. Teachers use their subject knowledge in a lively and skilful manner to ensure that whole-class discussions make students respond fully and that the transition between activities is quick and smooth. Students in Year 7 enjoyed exploring settlement changes in this way and worksheets with graded questions enabled everyone to realise their learning potential, including special educational needs and gifted and talented students. A full fieldwork programme, use of ICT, and a Saturday morning GCSE revision club all help students to learn well. Learning was less successful when some teachers had difficulty dealing with students who called out in lessons or who wasted time gossiping. Students did not learn well when the work set required listening and writing skills that they did not have.
127. Key staff are good role models for others who teach the subject. Evaluation of the department's strengths and weaknesses is measured and clear, as is the improvement plan. Teachers manage homework extremely well and

mark work regularly and consistently. Students are given their level of attainment, a grade for effort and action points for improvement. Assessment data is monitored carefully and acted upon, taking gender and ethnic background into account. Lesson observations and the sharing of good practice are not yet firmly established. The overall quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and standards are rising.

## History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Standards are below average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students respond positively in lessons and this has a good impact on their learning.
- Many students find it difficult to express their ideas and knowledge in writing and this lowers the standards they attain.
- All teachers in the department have good subject knowledge.
- Teaching styles are not varied enough to meet students' wide range of learning needs.

## Commentary

128. Pupils make good progress in Years 7 to 9 because they understand all the topics studied and ask searching questions about them. Their written work is below average as they find it hard to express their ideas clearly. In a Year 8 lesson, higher-attaining students reached well above average standards in some aspects of their work, using their knowledge, understanding and very good oral skills to provide evidence from research on the development of scientific methods in the Renaissance period. However, the highest-attaining students are not always provided with challenging tasks to extend their knowledge and skills. Some do independent research because they enjoy the topics, so they watch specialised television channels and explore the Internet for information.
129. The GCSE examination results were below the national average in 2003 and 2004. A higher percentage of boys achieved the highest grades of A\* and A than girls, which is the reverse of the national picture. Girls achieved a higher percentage of grades A\*-G. Higher ability students following the GCSE course use their previous knowledge and understanding of events well. When analysing sources of information, they write well-structured arguments to support their conclusions. All students speak confidently, and the majority have a sound knowledge and understanding of historical details, for example, giving evidence of mistakes made by the police in the search for Jack the Ripper. However, the weak standard of written work of some students significantly lowers their examination results. The organisation and presentation of students' work varies widely; overall, it is satisfactory.
130. The combination of students' positive attitudes, coupled with the teachers' good subject knowledge, produces successful learning in most lessons. However, although teachers use their subject knowledge well to explain and discuss work, in some lessons, their style of teaching was not motivating, being too concentrated on mechanistic aspects such as filling in worksheets. This is not helpful for lower-ability students, who need variety to keep them interested. Teachers do not encourage higher-attaining students of all ages to read widely. Good examples of links with other subjects occur. For example, a teacher skilfully used the students' knowledge of their own religions to make comparisons with the beliefs and rituals of the North American Indians. Teachers generate many valuable opportunities for students to celebrate their own cultures' histories, especially during Black History month.
131. The subject coordinator is dealing with the issue of matching teaching styles to learning needs by monitoring teaching and learning. Resources should be broadened to support more imaginative and motivating teaching. Opportunities for visits are wide ranging, including castles, Normandy and the Houses of Parliament. All make a significant contribution to students' learning. The department has addressed the issue of too little time for the subject. The change of examination board means that the GCSE course is now more relevant to the students' interests and aptitudes. Since the last inspection, there has been a steady improvement in GCSE results and the department teaches more topics that interest pupils. Monitoring of pupils' work has also improved.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is satisfactory	Management is satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The time allocated for religious education for students who do not take a GCSE course does not meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
- Students in Years 7 to 9 and those taking the GCSE course learn and achieve well, because of good teaching.
- Students' personal knowledge of their own beliefs is used well by teachers as a starting point to their discovery of other world faiths.
- The fact that students have chosen to study religious education as a GCSE course in Year 10 is a good indication of the increasing interest in this subject.
- Opportunities for students to undertake research, to use ICT and write more extensively on issues are limited.

### Commentary

132. Students enter the school with very varied knowledge of world religions and religious practices. The religious understanding and skills of most students in Year 7 are below the expectation for their age. In Years 7 to 9, they acquire sound knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and the teachings of the major faiths. The ability of students following the GCSE course to interpret religious beliefs and select evidence to support ideas is above average. They are sensitive and mature. Students in Years 10 and 11 who follow the SPACE course achieve satisfactorily, but their progress is limited by the lack of time to explore religious beliefs fully.
133. There are no specialist teachers teaching the subject. Teachers generally plan well and lessons move at a good pace. In the more effective ones, teachers draw on knowledge of students' own beliefs. This was noted particularly when students in Years 7 and 8 compared Islamic clothes to those of the Sikh faith; in this lesson, students learned well. The better teaching always challenges students to justify their views and beliefs. Students in the Year 10 GCSE course discussed and compared their views of suffering from Christian and Islamic stances and grasped key issues well. They were then able to explain clearly why this might change a believer's understanding of the purpose of life.
134. Behaviour is generally good, although a small number of students are disruptive, particularly when they are not interested in the work. Students with English as an additional language and special educational needs are well supported. Teachers' marking, and assessment generally, show students how they can improve their work so students develop a good knowledge and understanding of their progress. However, teachers' marking is not consistently thorough and books are not monitored regularly. This leads to a small but significant number of students presenting work untidily and leaving pieces of work incomplete. Students are not encouraged to undertake and research extended projects.
135. With no head of department at present, senior managers have done a good job in maintaining the day-to-day work of the non-specialist team. This is a satisfactory stopgap. They have ensured that teaching and learning are monitored. The topics covered provide help to develop students' spiritual, moral, cultural and social skills. There is a diversity of work on the major world faiths that teachers use well.
136. The GCSE course syllabus helps students to tackle sensitive topics that affect their lives. However, the short amount of time in Years 10 and 11 does not allow the full coverage of the subject outlined in the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This limits the time students have to explore significant, topical issues. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection and it remains unsatisfactory. Development of the GCSE course and improvement in teaching and learning are good, but the limitations from having no subject specialists have a significant impact, particularly on helping the students develop insight into the impact that religious beliefs and practices have on their lives.

### DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Standards are below average	Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students learn to use a wide range of materials but have a limited understanding of how to design.
- Teaching is good; students enjoy lessons and present their work with care.
- There is too little use of modern materials and technology, for example, computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD/CAM)
- In Years 10 and 11, standards in resistant materials are above average but overall standards have declined over the last three years.

### Commentary

137. In 2004, less than four out of ten of students attained grades A\*-C and less than nine out of ten grades A\*-G. Results in resistant materials, by far the most popular GCSE course option, are above average but overall standards have dropped, with low results in food, graphics and textiles. Some classes in these three subjects were not taught by specialists last year, but this situation has now been rectified. As is the case nationally, girls do better in the GCSE examinations than boys.
138. Students have a sound understanding of different materials and processes and they use specialist equipment, such as sewing machines and pillar drills, confidently, competently and safely. Students persevere, although they are not all confident learners, and many demand a great deal of attention. Lower attaining students are limited by their weak literacy, numeracy and study skills. Higher attaining students develop their work very thoughtfully, produce good quality, creative and original products, for example, wall hangings and lamps, and evaluate their work thoroughly. Students do not use computers enough in school. When their research is superficial, students do not show how they have developed their designs and their evaluations tend to be subjective.
139. As teachers with the correct specialist knowledge now teach the GCSE courses, standards are improving. Lessons are well structured. In the best ones, there is a buzz of activity and a sense of urgency. Students in Year 8 were enthralled by using CAM to make toys. In very good lessons, teachers introduce practical activities, such as sewing machine techniques, extremely skilfully. Some teachers provide excellent opportunities for students to work collaboratively, to share tasks and evaluate their progress at the end of lessons. This improves students' social skills and their attitudes to learning very effectively.
140. Teachers mark students' work regularly, maintain progress logs for older students and give good verbal feedback in most lessons. Students know how to improve their work. However, assessment is not always well linked to the aims of lessons in Years 7 to 9 or to GCSE examination criteria. Short-term planning does not always identify learning outcomes that can be measured. Lessons often reinforce students' competence in literacy, numeracy and ICT. However, the limited emphasis on design skills limits students' understanding. Technicians support students' learning well.
141. This complex department, with some relatively new members, functions well as an effective team. In all design areas, some projects undertaken in Years 7 to 9 do not allow students to achieve higher levels. The accommodation and resources, which are satisfactory, do not reflect the school's Specialist Technology status, although this has funded the effective work carried out in local primary schools. Since the last inspection, reasonable schemes of work for Years 7 to 9 have been developed and the quality of teaching has improved using the Key Stage 3 Strategy well.

### VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Drama and media studies were sampled.

## Drama

142. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is similar to the national average and the teachers' accurate assessment is a strength that helps students to improve. The GCSE examination results were average and work seen are in line with national expectations. Students achieve well. Students perform and improvise with energy and, in the best lessons, teachers model activities with great effect. In general, however, students' ability to discuss work lags slightly behind their performance skills. For both performance work and in departmental self-evaluation, the head of department's vision aspires to excellence and this has resulted in very good leadership and management overall and a year-on-year improvement in standards. She has developed an expressive arts team spirit that has resulted in many moving performances; many are an inspiring statement of the school's commitment to the positive celebration of cultural diversity. The excellent support that she has given others, within her role as head of expressive arts, is highly valued by the school.

## Media Studies

143. Media studies is a very popular GCSE examination subject, with well over 60 students in each of Years 10 and 11, and a significant addition to the curriculum. It was introduced in the last academic year. All work is at least in line with national expectations and a significant amount of it is well above expectations. This represents excellent achievement. Teachers and students use interactive whiteboards well in lessons, the latter to prepare and make their own presentations. Excellent leadership and very good management have contributed to the growth in popularity of the subject and to standards of attainment. All teaching is very good and often excellent. The best lessons are characterised by high challenge and excellent pace.

## Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **good**.

Standards are average in Years 7 to 9 and above average in Years 10 and 11	Students achieve satisfactorily in Years 7 to 9 and well in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11	Learning is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Year 11 are improving and are above expectations.
- Leadership and management are good, which results in a clear direction for the department.
- Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is very good. Students are highly motivated and work very hard.
- Art in the locality is not explored enough.
- Visits to widen students' experiences of the subject are not yet planned for Years 7 to 9.
- Assessments in Years 7 to 9 do not accurately match National Curriculum levels.

## Commentary

144. Standards in the 2004 GCSE examinations were lower than those in 2003, when they were below the national average. In 2004, students gained higher grades in fine art than in the double award applied art and design. Students achieved well to gain those results. Standards at the end of Year 9 match national expectations overall, and at the end of Year 11, they are above those expected. This is due to the good teaching following a period of staffing problems, which affected the GCSE examination results in 2004. Students quickly consolidate good drawing skills, but their painting skills on entry to the school are poor and are still below the expected standard at the end of Year 9. At the end of Year 11, fine art students realise their intentions with a high degree of creativity, using a variety of media to a very high standard. Applied art students develop their ideas well, for example, overprinting in more than one colour. Their work is just below that expected for this stage of the course. All students, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well.

145. Teachers plan effectively to challenge students, which moves them on in their learning. Teachers give clear demonstrations so that students understand skills and processes. This was seen when a teacher showed how the outlines of bottles could be manipulated and shaded to create cubist designs. In Years 10 and 11, teachers encourage students' individuality and creativity, which contributes to the above average standards. They provide

interesting and stimulating tasks, to which students respond, and therefore learn. Relationships are very good and students ask for help, absorb the teachers' comments and thus make progress.

146. The school now has a head of department, who was appointed recently. Supported by other teachers, she has already produced a handbook, schemes of work and a development plan, the latter including linking up with local artists, which will ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum. The imaginative visit to the Saatchi gallery for Year 11 made a tremendous impact on these students. No outings to galleries or exhibitions are planned for Years 7 to 9, who would also benefit from widening their horizons. Although all artwork is assessed regularly, the National Curriculum levels given in Years 7 to 9 are inaccurate and mostly too low. In Years 10 and 11, assessment is good as standards are accurately related to examination criteria. The separation of the three art rooms makes the smooth functioning of the department difficult. Standards and teaching have improved since the last inspection.

## Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Standards are below average in Years 7 to 9 and average in Years 10 and 11	Students achieve well
Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11	Learning is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11
Leadership is good	Management is satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- In public performances and assemblies, students of all ages perform with expression and energy.
- Teachers are committed to improvement and serving all students' needs, and work hard to achieve this.
- Provision in Years 7 to 9 is hampered by the lack of resources and the large classes.

## Commentary

147. Students in Year 7 come to the school with musical skills and understanding that are well below average. By the end of Year 9, they perform and improvise effectively. They listen well to each other's performances, both in assemblies and in lessons and evaluate performance work well. In 2004, no student attained GCSE examination grades A\*-C in 2004. Results were lower than usual because the examination board did not consider the composition coursework to be in line with syllabus requirements. The school is appealing against this decision. The work of the present students in Years 10 and 11 is in line with national expectations.
148. Teaching and learning are underpinned by the teachers' care and respect for students, which have generated much enthusiasm for the subject. Now, 120 students have instrumental lessons and there is a long waiting list. In the best lessons, listening, composing and performing are integrated within a framework of imaginative activities, for example, team games to learn and apply music theory, and the study of compositions by an interesting range of composers from different musical traditions.
149. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is only satisfactory because a limit is placed on what can be achieved with the poor resources. In these years, for example, three students frequently have to share one keyboard, which makes advanced composition and group performances difficult. With over 30 students in some Year 7 classes, individual support is limited. In Years 10 and 11, where the range of instruments and number of keyboards is just satisfactory, teaching is at least good. Students in Year 10 sing well in solo work and in groups. Teachers are knowledgeable about exploiting the limited ICT resources and GCSE students learn very well, using sequencing software skilfully.
150. Although standards, teaching and learning have not improved since the last inspection, this is explained by the considerable turnover of staff in recent years. Leadership is now good and the new head of department's vision to unlock the talent and potential of students in the school is already having a positive impact. He receives excellent support from the head of expressive arts. Both teachers cope as well as possible with the inadequate resources in Years 7 to 9. The way in which students are assessed and supported to learn instruments is very good and musically able students in Years 7 to 9 are benefiting from this. The number of students taking instrumental lessons has improved significantly and the enthusiasm of visiting teachers provides a good base for the next stage of planned development - the expansion of ensemble performance activity. String and wind ensembles have already started.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is very good	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been an excellent improvement in the ethos of the department.
- Students achieve well and become independent learners.
- Very positive attitudes and very good relationships exist between students and staff.
- Teachers' very good subject knowledge and high expectations make learning challenging and enjoyable.
- Leadership and management of a strong team of enthusiastic staff are very good.
- Very few students participate in the extra-curricular activities provided for them.

### Commentary

151. The staffing has completely changed in the last two years and is now a team of five specialists, led by a head of department who has been in post permanently for six months. This accounts for the higher standards and achievement of students in Years 7 to 10, who have experienced more of the teaching of this strong and very well managed department. Students in Year 7 regularly attend extra-curricular football and dance clubs and the school has football, basketball and volleyball teams. However, very few students attend clubs on a regular basis, even though teachers offer them every week.
152. Twelve students sat the GCSE examination in 2003 and attained results that were above the national average. No student took the examination in 2004. In the present Year 11, GCSE students attain standards that are below average. Many are hindered by their low levels of literacy skills. GCSE students in Year 10 attain average standards. Their practical expertise is good and they take advantage of the extra help teachers provide in clubs and practices.
153. Most students arrive in Year 7 with below average standards. In reaching average standards by the end of Year 9, they have made good progress and achieved well. Boys and girls develop a secure knowledge of fitness, and warm up effectively and independently. They gain this understanding through the teachers' insistence on thorough warm-up activities at the start of every lesson. Boys quickly acquire new skills and tactics in football. Girls perform basic trampolining skills with control. Students' analytical skills are developing well; they make considered and constructive comments on their own and others' performances. Students in Years 10 and 11 attain average standards in core lessons and their achievement is good. Many students, including those taking the junior sports leaders course, continue to develop their performance, co-operative and evaluative skills. The achievement of a small minority of students in Year 11 do not achieve well because they are unenthusiastic.
154. Students' good achievement is directly attributable to the mostly good and sometimes very good teaching. Thorough planning, which encourages students to take responsibility and learn through analysis of movement, is based on new and comprehensive schemes of work. Teachers have consistently high expectations and make learning interesting and challenging. Their very good subject expertise means they give high quality demonstrations on which students model their skills. These demonstrations are particularly effective in helping students with special educational needs and those for whom English is a second language to learn and achieve as well as their peers. The very good assessment system is used well to show students how to improve. In less effective lessons, teachers become preoccupied in organising activities to the detriment of providing students with the skills to complete tasks. The department's use of ICT, which is satisfactory, has not yet been fully developed.
155. Excellent improvements have been made since the last inspection. These include: students' standards in performance and evaluative skills, students' progress, quality of teaching, the use of single gender lessons and the introduction of sports leaders courses in Year 10. The consistently high expectations of staff have created a culture of learning across the department. The indoor facilities are extensive but there are no playing fields so all outdoor activities take place on the playgrounds. This is far from ideal and hinders learning.

## BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES

**Business** was sampled.

156. Applied business GCSE was taken for the first time in 2004, when over 50 per cent of students attained grades A\*-C. Present standards are average but are higher in some classes than others. By Year II, students have good understanding of how businesses work and basic concepts of market research and how to use them. Students develop increasing competence in financial accounting. In some lessons, students achieve well but in others they are passive, not engaged in their work and do not behave sensibly. Some written portfolio work is very good, revealing good research, competence in selecting evidence and analysis and interpretation of results.
157. Teaching is mostly good. In the best lessons, teachers focus on raising achievement by activities which become progressively more difficult. In these lessons, students enjoy challenging questions, respond well and learn effectively. In a few lessons, the teachers' expectations are too low, lesson content is colourless and uninteresting, and activities do not build on what students already know and understand. Support for students with English as an additional language is excellent and all students' learning benefits from the new online course materials, detailed success criteria and helpful guidance about writing. The department runs an after-school club, an assignment clinic and Saturday morning booster sessions before the summer examinations. Leadership and management are very good. The head of department has raised standards by rewriting the schemes of work and building up a valuable bank of resources. He leads an effective team of both new and experienced staff.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactorily in Years 10 and 11
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Students have a clear knowledge of what good citizenship means.
- Students enjoy their work and comment very favourably about what they have done.
- Students play an active part in the life of the school through the school councils and many other voluntary service activities.

### **Commentary**

158. Citizenship is taught within the SPACE programme by form tutors and through other subjects. By the end of Year 9, students have a sound knowledge and comprehension of citizenship and what being a good citizen means. They also recognise the importance of working for and with others in their own society and in the wider global community, particularly through the links with Lavenda Springs in Kenya. They communicate well when talking about their ideas. In Year 11, students are well aware of their rights, responsibilities and duties as a citizen.
159. Where teaching is most effective, teachers begin sessions with skilful questions, recapping previous learning clearly. They use of a range of teaching styles, particularly positive reinforcement to build students' self-confidence. This helps students to discuss issues and challenge each other's ideas and views well. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson when students discussed the UK's responsibility for clearing landmines. In Year 7, work on the qualities of a good citizen produced considerable discussion, which promoted effective learning. A very small number of lessons were less effective. This was particularly so when teachers had not matched the work sufficiently to the students' needs, aptitudes and interests.
160. A wide range of additional activities support the programme of study. Good use is made of external speakers, such as magistrates, barristers and MPs. The year and school councils are run democratically, with students electing representatives. They give good scope for students to make decisions and take responsible action on a variety of issues. Students have responded with considerable maturity to the charitable fund raising opportunities, particularly those linked to Lavenda Springs.
161. A profile of Year 7 students' citizenship activities is developing well. Tutors keep records based on students' self-evaluation of their knowledge and understanding of citizenship and personal, social and health education. Students'

attainment is now reported to parents in all years. The course has been well planned and mapped against the requirements of the National Curriculum. There is time allocated to careers lessons within this work. A thorough analysis of citizenship opportunities through subjects has been completed. Attitudes towards SPACE are good. Behaviour in lessons is satisfactory, but a small number of students are not interested by aspects of the work they are set. Most listen to one another well and are willing to consider views which they may not hold themselves. There are good opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, cultural and social skills. Students respond with maturity on many occasions, particularly showing sensitivity towards the needs of the multicultural community in which they live.

### **Personal, social and health education**

162. SPACE lessons help students to explore many significant issues, such as bullying, smoking, drugs, sex education and crime. These help them to gain an insight into and understanding of many everyday situations which are relevant to their lives. The quality of teaching is very much dependent on the tutors' skills, which are varied. Although all teaching seen was at least satisfactory, it was most effective when teachers used their knowledge and understanding of what interested their class to plan tasks and discuss issues. Planning of the programme for each year is well managed by the directors of learning.
163. Students develop good skills of enquiry and communication. The inclusion of citizenship topics allows students to look at a wide range of issues, such as human rights and responsibilities. These, combined with the personal, social and health topics and religious education, provide students with good opportunities for spiritual reflection. As the senior staff teach the religious education element of the SPACE programme in Years 10 and 11, students benefit from a highly committed team approach. The strong moral content of the ten sessions dealing with right and wrong underpins the good behaviour seen in many lessons and around the school.
164. Very good relationships between students and teachers, who know them well, mean that open and frank discussions often take place. Students with special educational needs take a full part in lessons and those at an early stage of learning English are also well included in activities. They contribute well orally when they can and other students support them very well. Teachers are well aware of their limited fluency in English and ensure that they have a fellow student who can interpret where possible. This contributes well to the development of students' social and cultural awareness.

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN THE SIXTH FORM

In the inspection, seven subjects and courses were inspected and are reported on in detail. Work in other subjects and courses was sampled and contributed to the overall picture of teaching and learning in the school.

The table below shows entry and performance information for courses completed in 2003 and 2004. National data for 2004 was not available.

### *Level 3 GCE AS level courses (no Year 12 results included)*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E		% gaining grades A-B		Average point score	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	1 (5)	100 (100)	-- (80.1)	0 (40.0)	-- (23.7)	30.0 (36.0)	-- (29.9)
Biology	4 (3)	100 (100)	-- (65.2)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (11.1)	22.5 (26.7)	-- (20.6)
Chemistry	3 (1)	100 (100)	-- (72.7)	0.0(0.0)	-- (13.9)	20.0 (20.0)	-- (24.1)
Design and Technology	1 (2)	100 (50.0)	-- (74.9)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (15.1)	30.0 (15.0)	-- (25.3)
Drama	2 (2)	100 (100)	-- (86.5)	0 (0.0)	-- (19.6)	35.0 (35.0)	-- (30.6)
English Literature	2 (5)	100 (100)	-- (85.9)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (19.1)	25.0 (34.0)	-- (30.2)
General Studies	14 (23)	100 (95.7)	-- (3.9)	14.3(13.0)	-- (17.8)	32.1 (29.1)	-- (25.7)
Geography	2 (3)	100 (33.3)	-- (74.3)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (19.8)	25.0 (6.7)	-- (26.5)
History	1 (1)	100 (100)	-- (80.7)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (19.5)	20.0 (20.0)	-- (28.6)
Information Technology	5 (5)	80.0 (40.0)	-- (67.0)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (10.9)	20.0 (10.0)	-- (21.4)
Mathematics	1 (6)	0.0 (33.3)	-- (61.9)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (17.1)	0.0 (8.3)	-- (22.1)
Media Studies	(2)	100 (100)	-- (86.4)	0.0 (50.0)	-- (23.8)	40.0 (45.0)	-- (32.0)
Other Languages	6 (14)	50 (71.4)	-- (82.6)	100 (40.0)	-- (42.9)	(33.6)	-- (36.2)
Other Social Studies	(2)	(100)	-- (69.7)	(0.0)	-- (16.7)	(30.0)	-- (24.1)
Physics	1 (2)	0 (50.0)	-- (68.6)	100 (0.0)	-- (14.4)	(15.0)	-- (22.7)
Psychology	4	100	--	25	--	--	40.0
Spanish	1	100	--	100	--	--	60.0
Sports/PE Studies	(1)	(0.0)	-- (73.2)	(0.0)	-- (11.4)	(0.0)	-- (23.1)

*Other languages taken were Arabic, Persian and Portuguese.*

### *Level 3 GCE A-level and VCE courses*

Subject	Number entered	% gaining grades A-E	% gaining grades A-B	Average point score
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		School	England	School	England	School	England
Art and Design	5 (8)	100 (100)	-- (98.6)	0.0 (50.0)	-- (50.2)	60.0 (90.0)	-- (87.5)
Biology	5 (5)	100 (100)	-- (96.4)	60.0(80.0)	-- (39.2)	96.0 (92.0)	-- (78.6)
Chemistry	7 (10)	100 (100)	-- (97.6)	14.3 (40.0)	-- (49.0)	71.4 (72.0)	-- (84.9)
Drama	4 (7)	100 (100)	-- (99.5)	25.0 (0.0)	-- (40.1)	75.0 (65.7)	-- (83.6)
Design and Technology	2 (6)	100 (100)	-- (97.8)	50.0 (0.0)	-- (35.0)	90.0(60.0)	-- (77.9)
English Literature	13 (8)	100 (100)	-- (99.5)	23.0 (37.5)	-- (46.5)	64.6(85.0)	-- (86.5)
Geography	1 (2)	100 (100)	-- (98.7)	0.0 (50.0)	-- (44.5)	60.0 (80.0)	-- (84.0)
History	2 (8)	100 (75)	-- (99.0)	0.0 (0.0)	-- (44.6)	60.0 (40.0)	-- (84.6)
Information Technology	2 (13)	100 (100)	-- (95.6)	0.0 (7.7)	-- (24.6)	40.0 (66.2)	-- (69.5)
Mathematics	8 (10)	100 (90)	-- (96.7)	50.0 (30.0)	-- (55.6)	85.0 (62.0)	-- (88.8)
Media Studies	11 (12)	100 (100)	-- (99.4)	63.6 (25.0)	-- (37.8)	96.4(86.7)	-- (82.1)
Other Languages	5 (6)	80.0 (100)	-- (96.9)	60.0 (66.7)	-- (64.5)	(100.0)	-- (93.8)
Physics	7 (8)	100 (100)	-- (96.7)	42.8 (12.5)	-- (44.6)	88.6 (67.5)	-- (81.7)
Psychology	6 (4)	100 (100)	-- (97.4)	16.6 (25.0)	-- (42.7)	66.7 (70.0)	-- (81.8)
Sociology	(2)	(100)	-- (98.2)	(0.0)	-- (44.3)	(50.0)	-- (83.6)
Business VCE	22 (7)	90.9 (85.7)	-- (65.0)	9.1 (0.0)	-- (14.6)	55.5 (51.4)	-- (60.1)
Information Technology VCE	10 (1)	90.0 (0.0)	-- (77.9)	(0.0)	-- (23.4)	62.0 (0.0)	-- (64.9)

*Other languages taken were Persian and Russian*

### ***Level 2 vocational qualifications***

Qualification	No in final year	% gaining qualification		% gaining merit		% gaining distinction	
		School	England	School	England	School	England
GNVQ Intermediate	--	School	England	School	England	School	England
Business	13	46.2	--	0.0	--	0.0	--
Leisure and Tourism	13	0.0	--	0.0	--	0.0	--
Science	17	70.6	--	35.3	--	0.0	--

## ENGLISH, LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION

The focus was on English. French in Year 12 and the programme for community languages were sampled.

### French and community languages

165. Students in Year 12 on an AS French course are progressing well, standards in speaking and comprehension are well above average and overall provision is good. The very successful initiative to promote community languages results in a large number of students gaining outstanding grades in a range of languages at GCSE, AS and A-level examinations. In 2004, students took AS in Arabic, Persian and Portuguese and A level in Persian and Russian.

### English

Provision in English is **good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is very good
Leadership is very good	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The numbers taking AS and A-level continue to increase.
- Results, though improving, remain below the national average.
- The library stock is not adequate to support A-level work.
- Very good teaching develops students' confidence to learn independently.
- Extra-curricular activities and visits have been too few and too infrequent.

### Commentary

166. The popularity of A-level English has increased. In 2002, eight students, all girls, took the examination and by 2004 there were 14 entrants. Although the percentage of grades A and B remained the same, half these students gained only an E grade. The department's open door policy has meant that some students with low GCSE grades have embarked on the A-level course. Wisely, teachers now check that they have the necessary interest and literacy skills to enjoy the work and cope with the course. The good results in GCSE literature in 2004 show that the 26 students in Year 12 have the potential to achieve very well.
167. In an excellent Year 13 lesson, students presented their analyses of the characters in *Howard's End*. They had researched and prepared their material in pairs and their presentations were articulate and confident. Skilfully guided by the teacher, lively, well-informed discussion followed each presentation so that by the end of the lesson, students had shared some fresh insights into the novel's character and theme. This was high quality sixth form teaching and learning, with students showing that they could work independently and learn from one another.
168. In another good lesson, productive group work involved students speculating about meaning and association in Caribbean poems and making good use of one another's suggestions. The teacher advised them to think about what a poem was about before starting annotation, helpfully emphasising that appreciative response to literature should come before analysis. In their study of Caribbean literature, students had also looked at the history and geography of the area, its language and culture.
169. Imaginative approaches to work on *A Streetcar named Desire* in Year 12 included a Van Gogh picture and a jazz record to create the mood of a scene being studied. Students responded well to this and to an intriguing quotations game the teacher had prepared to focus attention on the text. Their reading and discussion of the play benefited from the resulting enjoyment and good humour.
170. Students' written work includes some very good critical essays which reflect the quality of learning seen in lessons. There is, understandably, a wide range of attainment and some students still have writing weaknesses which affect their accuracy and fluency. Most students enjoy the subject, want to do well and work hard. In their writing, as in class, they have the support of good teaching and thorough, knowledgeable evaluation of their work.

171. The library does not provide an adequate or attractive range of background reading for A-level. Extra-curricular activities in English have also been rather thin in the past. It was surprising to hear a Year 13 student say that he had never seen a Shakespeare play. However, a good start has been made in planning more activities outside lessons, exploiting the exciting opportunities London can offer. Although there will inevitably be limitations of time, money and situation, there should be none of inclination - students do not yet experience enough plays, lectures and exhibitions to extend and enrich their understanding of literature. A strong team is very well led and managed by the new head of department who has a clear understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.

### Language and literacy across the curriculum

172. The implementation of the literacy strategies in the main school and the school's emphasis on the importance of literacy have had positive effects on teaching and learning in Years 12 and 13. The success in developing literacy skills noted in the main school contributes at A-level to the excellent results in media studies and to some good written work in the sciences and mathematics. GCSE science provides students with the language as well as the science skills to follow an AS course. In sociology, students apply the correct terminology and language for analysis. In psychology, written work is below average but reading, speaking and listening skills are well developed. In business studies, students articulate their ideas well. Basic errors in literacy affect the quality of written work in history and geography.

173. In the sixth form, some of the best contributions in lessons are made by speakers of English as an additional language, many now fully at home with the complexities and nuances of the language. In science, these students do as well as others because, where necessary, work is written especially for them. In physical education, a subject which demands good writing at this level, one student for whom English is a second language is working at distinction level. Current work in English illustrates how well students' speaking and listening skills have been developed. Confident presentations and lively, often searching, discussion and argument contribute to high quality work in class and some good writing. Similar oral skills are evident in other sixth form activities; students would benefit from more opportunities to practise taking part in discussions and debates outside lessons. The excellent talk on Ramadan given by two members of Year 11 was a clear indication of the good speaking skills which students bring into their work in the sixth form.

### MATHEMATICS

The focus was on A-level mathematics. Further mathematics was sampled.

#### Further mathematics

174. This is taught well to just a few students, in a mixed class of students from both Years 12 and 13. Students learn well because the teacher's subject knowledge is very good and concepts are covered thoroughly and explained clearly.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory	

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge.
- Course arrangements are flexible so that students can study over longer or shorter periods to meet their needs.
- Most teaching reflects the considerable care taken to establish each student's level of understanding and provide good support.
- Except in the best lessons, opportunities for students to hypothesise, predict and explain their reasoning are too limited,
- ICT and applications of mathematics are used but not frequently enough to enrich teaching and learning.

#### Commentary

175. The department has a policy of allowing students with a wide range of abilities to take AS and A-level courses and overall attainment on entry to the courses is lower than in many other schools. The school's usual minimum entry requirement is a GCSE grade B; some students with a GCSE grade C take the courses following an access course. With considerable flexibility, some students study AS courses over two years and benefit from this. These arrangements mean that even those students who are not particularly gifted mathematicians can attain a qualification. Numbers of students taking mathematics have risen considerably. Rightly, the department has been concerned to accept onto the course and enter for examination only students who demonstrate a reasonable chance of success. Retention on courses is generally good, with only a few students dropping out; this is because students are supported well, which they appreciate.
176. AS and A-level results in 2003 were well below the national averages. Students did not do as well in their mathematics examinations as they did in the other subjects that they took. A-level results in 2004 rose because of improvements in the quality of teaching; students attained their target grades. Present students are achieving well and understanding new mathematical concepts, vocabulary and technical skills.
177. Teachers are able and knowledgeable mathematicians. In the best lessons, their very effective questions check students' understanding and challenge them to think for themselves; students are pushed to learn well with just the right level of timely support. Such very good teaching and learning was seen in a mechanics lesson on the linear movement of a particle. Students are diligent and maintain an interest and determination in their mathematical studies. Some teaching makes good use of the interactive whiteboard but students do not use computers frequently enough to support their learning.
178. Some applications of mathematical topics are provided in course textbooks but students' understanding is not as a rule enriched by learning about how their skills could be used in the world of work or elsewhere. Some coursework assignments in statistics do provide such an opportunity. Lessons which are sound rather than good cover technical skills and students master them but are not given enough opportunities to suggest approaches, explore, predict, hypothesise or prove.
179. Teachers seek constantly to improve the quality of provision and students' achievements. Efforts have been and are being made to extend learning opportunities through links with other schools and higher education establishments. The classrooms have too few stimulating displays of A-level work. Resources are barely adequate. Some good use is made of computers but this is not routine or frequent.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

180. Students' competence in mathematics is sufficiently well developed for them to manage tasks in other subjects, especially the sciences, that require skills such as computation, estimation, graphical interpretation and algebraic manipulation. Problem solving is generally undertaken reasonably well except in the case of some lower-attaining students whose skills are not well developed; weaknesses were seen in a technology lesson.

### **SCIENCE**

The focus was on biology. Physics, chemistry and GNVQ science were sampled.

181. In all three of the sampled subjects, teachers have real enthusiasm and plan lessons with a variety of carefully-timed activities to stimulate the students' interest. The teachers get on very well with the students and this relationship, along with the way they care, leads to students making good progress. The students feel well supported in their GCSE course, which has greatly increased the numbers choosing to take AS and A-level. Now that the numbers of students have increased so dramatically, all the sixth form science subjects would benefit from an overall co-ordinator who could extend the links with other institutions to enrich the curriculum.

### **Physics**

182. Teaching is always very good and work is set at different levels to make sure all students make the best possible progress. Students for whom English is an additional language do as well as the others because they have work written especially for them. Computers and the interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to help the students learn and to let them demonstrate their excellent ICT skills.

### **Chemistry**

183. The teachers are very skilful and the students respond to them very well. Teachers ask probing questions to clarify ideas and to reinforce or extend knowledge. Teachers put the results from class experiments onto the school Intranet

so that students can incorporate them into their reports, set up spreadsheets and use them to plot graphs. Students achieve well.

### **GNVQ science**

184. This is a popular and successful course with 21 students in Year 12. Students take this course for a variety of reasons, the main two being because they missed out on a C grade in the GCSE examinations or because they joined the school late with no formal science qualifications. In many cases, the course gives them the language and scientific skills they need to join AS courses in science within the school or to go on to AVCE courses in other colleges. These students are successful when they move on. Teaching is good and students achieve well. For this practical course based on science in the workplace, students make a number of visits to see what they are learning put into practice. At present, they are carrying out aseptic techniques to culture bacteria and will visit a local hospital to see the same task carried out by a specialist.

## Biology

Provision in biology is **very good**.

Standards are above average	Students achieve well
Teaching is very good	Learning is very good
Leadership is very good	Management is good
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is usually very good, reflecting the teachers' detailed planning and love of the subject.
- Teachers inspire students to do their best.
- Opportunities for students to use ICT are limited, contrasting with the regular use that teachers make of the interactive whiteboards.
- Students are offered a restricted range of enrichment activities.

### Commentary

185. Results are broadly in line with the national average and regularly some students attain high grades in both AS and A-levels. When students' results are compared with their prior attainment, achievement is seldom less than satisfactory and often good. Students learn enthusiastically and diligently, particularly when carrying out investigations. In a very good Year 12 lesson involving the action of enzymes on solutions, students planned a range of exploratory investigations varying temperature and pH. In two groups, they engaged co-operatively, selecting variables and allocating controls. The manner in which the teacher set the scene encouraged higher attainers to think, and stimulated all students. This was sixth form teaching at its best, stretching learners of all abilities.
186. Teaching is mostly very good. Numbers taking the subject have quadrupled to over 50 in Year 12, reflecting the students' trust in the enthusiastic, well-qualified teachers. Students say they are pleased they chose the subject, are supported well, have very good relationships with their teachers and that their work is marked regularly. The department's teaching style clearly increases students' confidence in Year 12 and most students intend to continue into Year 13. Three teachers organise the subject, supported by the head of faculty. They work well together, sharing both theoretical and practical lessons. Recognising their relative inexperience, the school has supported them to attend valuable professional development. Students appreciate the teachers' different strengths and achievements that enrich and enhance the teaching of the subject.
187. Assessment is good; detailed records are kept of the students' accomplishments. New arrivals to the UK are assimilated well. Students' aspirations are high - they strive to get on degree courses, such as medicine, physiotherapy and pharmacy at London, Oxbridge and leading provincial universities. There are no discernible differences in attainment or achievement between male and female students.
188. The subject has traditionally used environmental studies centres in the Lake District. However, links with higher education institutions, businesses and scientific establishments are underdeveloped. Students do not use ICT enough for independent study and projects. Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection, with accelerated developments since 2003.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in information and communication technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Standards are below average	Students achieve unsatisfactorily
Teaching is unsatisfactory	Learning is unsatisfactory
Leadership is unsatisfactory	Management is unsatisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Examination results were average in 2003 but declined in 2004.
- Students are not challenged to present high quality coursework.
- Students lack a deep understanding of complex ICT systems.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and deliver some successful lessons.

### Commentary

189. In the past, only a few students, mainly boys, chose this subject in the sixth form. The number of students following the AS and AVCE courses has increased this year, with six groups in the sixth form. In 2004, the two students who completed the course attained E grades. In 2004, ten students took the vocational A-level and all but one passed. These, and the AS results in 2004, are likely to be below average. Present standards are the same. Students' folders do not reveal enough work on the basic knowledge and understanding which underpin advanced courses. Coursework tasks are too simple, being similar to the standard required for GCSE examinations. There is no evidence that students produce user guides for their case studies - a requirement of their syllabus. Teachers' marking is not rigorous and gives students too little advice about how they can improve.
190. Nevertheless, the teaching is at least satisfactory in lessons. Teachers have good understanding of their subject and relate well to students, who work independently and use computers confidently. Students master spreadsheet functions and learn well about current data protection legislation. In one excellent lesson, students were assessed on how well they could train others to use an identified spreadsheet function. This required very careful planning by both teacher and students and thoughtfulness in evaluation. The students clearly understood the need to consider a range of issues and prepared materials well.
191. The recent development and use of on-line resources for staff and students to share is a positive move towards improving standards but as yet teachers do not exploit them enough to develop students' comprehension of complex systems. Interactive whiteboards are available in each classroom but teachers mainly use them to project information, not to stimulate learning by using them creatively. The management of ICT is unsatisfactory because, over the whole course, students do not achieve well enough. Leadership of the department lacks the necessary drive to ensure that staff absence is managed efficiently and that the satisfactory, and sometimes better, teaching in lessons leads to sound learning in the long term. The courses offered do not meet the needs of all students. Those who did not take a GCSE course or did not do well cannot tackle the advanced level courses and no alternatives are offered.

### Information and communication technology across the curriculum

192. Students use computers competently to prepare coursework and essays and to carry out research on the Internet. Although plans are evident, computers were not used often to support learning in lessons. In science, students presented their results of an investigation into nuclear power on the whiteboard, incorporating video clips and animations; this was excellent use of modern technology. In AVCE and GNVQ business studies, students master spreadsheets for break-even and cash flow analysis and create presentations well, for example, on marketing topics.

## HUMANITIES

The focus was on psychology. Sociology, geography, AVCE leisure and tourism, history and government and politics were sampled.

### Sociology

193. Standards are average and students achieve well. Students can define and apply sociological terminology to everyday phenomena, for example, using notions of consumerism and cultural relativity to explain and critique their analysis of a research article on changing gender stereotypes. Teaching is very good and a variety of imaginative, innovative and stimulating methods are used to create energy and challenge. The very effective use of ICT creates pace and stretch while focused questions create high expectations for all students. Established assumptions are challenged and discussions move at a fast pace. All students make good progress and are responsive, enthusiastic and thoughtful. Library resources and textbooks are not good enough to support more independent learning.

### **Geography**

194. Students are very interested in the human geography module being studied this term, and competent at doing independent research. Standards are average. In a Year 12 lesson, students understood statistical correlation and applied it to factors affecting how countries develop. The main teaching method used was imaginative and effective. Students performed role-play(s) in groups, representing nations. In running their countries, students had to carry out financial transactions and deal with the political aspects of government. Students enjoyed the challenge and they achieved highly.

### **Leisure and tourism**

195. In the Year 13 lesson observed, students held a business meeting. The teacher deliberately played a low key advisory role so that students could take responsibility for planning a school football competition. Students enjoyed their meeting, achieved well, and showed above average skills of communication and organisation.

### **History**

196. A very small number of students chose A-level history in 2004; half of them achieved their predicted grades. Teaching is good because the teachers have good subject knowledge and enthuse the students. Small seminar groups provide an environment in which students become increasingly confident in discussions and where the teacher allows them the opportunity to develop their ideas without undue intervention. Consequently, students gain in knowledge and the ability to express themselves. However, too little attention is paid by teachers to basic errors of literacy which sometimes occur in students' written work.

### **Government and politics**

197. Students make good progress towards achieving their targeted A-level grades. In seminar discussions, they had good knowledge and understanding of features of government between the two world wars. However, their written work shows that they make basic errors of literacy and style, although the information they produce is clearly well researched. Students much enjoy visiting the Houses of Parliament as part of the course.

## Psychology

Provision in psychology is **satisfactory**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is satisfactory	Learning is satisfactory
Leadership is unsatisfactory	Management is unsatisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- An enthusiastic, committed specialist teacher has been appointed recently.
- Students are responsive, purposeful and enjoy the subject.
- Teaching plans do not include enough ways to promote active, independent learning, taking into account individual learning styles and the students' different abilities.
- The course is not firmly rooted in psychological theory and research.
- The subject has yet to be placed within the science faculty, to strengthen its leadership, management, development and its status as a rigorous behavioural science.

### Commentary

198. Past results, based on small numbers, have fluctuated. Overall AS results were above the national average while A-level results were below, although all students have passed in the last three years. Results in the research and psychological investigation paper are the weakest. Standards are average and students articulate their ideas very well. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject's key concepts and theories, and debate with insight and thoughtfulness. Students in Year 12 know the main theories about the acquisition of language and students in Year 13 have a good understanding of the debates about addiction. They also understand the ethics that underpin all psychological activity.
199. However, students in Year 12 find it hard to use psychological theory, research and terminology to support and justify their views when they consider the application of concepts to everyday life. Too much of their discussion is based on 'man-in-the-street' psychology. In Year 13, too, students are insufficiently rooted in research methodology to analyse topics from a rigorous, evidence-based perspective. Students' written work is below average. The teacher gives them too many hand-outs and students rely on these and their own notes too much – the latter often lack rigour and reference to research evidence. Skills of listening, speaking, reading and evaluating are developed well.
200. All students make progress over and above that expected from their entry grades, which is due to their, and their teacher's, commitment and enthusiasm. Teaching is rooted in very good subject knowledge, which is conveyed confidently. Teaching, however, is overly reliant on giving explanations to, and having discussions with, the whole class, which means that at times the pace is slow and not stimulating, particularly in the very large Year 12 group. There are not enough small group and paired work, and imaginative activities to encourage independent learning.
201. Long and medium-term planning is thin and lesson plans, although detailed, do not include using double lessons in a creative way. Written comments on students' work are helpful and detailed but, at their request, the teacher is developing more individualised assessment so that students are clear about what they need to do in order to improve their work.
202. Psychology has no base room nor has the teacher easy access to computers during lessons. There are too few textbooks and very limited reference books in the library. This limits achievement and restricts more imaginative teaching. Recent uncertainty over which faculty is responsible for psychology has weakened leadership and management. It will now be rooted within the science faculty, where its essential status as a behavioural, research and investigative science can be recognised and its resource needs can be addressed.
203. Recent improvements have been the appointment of an enthusiastic, newly-qualified specialist teacher, who is keen to establish links with other institutions and other psychology teachers. The other main change is the large increase in numbers taking psychology in the sixth form - it is clearly a popular subject.

## ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANUFACTURING

### Technology

Provision in technology is **satisfactory**.

Standards are below average	Students achieve satisfactorily
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is good	Management is satisfactory
Improvement since the last inspection has been good	

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Examination results were below average in 2003 but improved considerably in 2004.
- Students' limited understanding of design techniques and new materials and technologies limits their creativity to provide solutions to design problems.

### **Commentary**

204. Until this year, only a few students studied design courses and examination results have been below average until 2004. Nine students are studying A-level and 17 are following an AS course in either resistant materials or graphics. Some students who did not achieve a high GCSE grade in resistant materials or graphics require a great deal of support.
205. A-level students have identified their own design problems, linked, for example, to the environment and recycling. Those taking the AS course work on a good range of projects related to children and the disabled. Students' research, analysis, numeracy skills and written work are sound. They are confident and aware of the gains in the knowledge they have acquired this term and in their ability to work with materials and equipment. Although students make very good use of ICT to present their work, because resources are limited, some have very little knowledge of CAD/CAM and control.
206. Teachers are knowledgeable about their specialisms and examination requirements, and structure their lessons well. Their professional approach encourages a collaborative approach to learning. Students do not have well-developed study skills and are not given enough guidance about how to make notes and use them effectively. Planning for the whole course is barely satisfactory and requires greater detail to structure learning for those students with weak study skills. Teachers do not emphasise how students should design for specific needs, or the impact of design on manufacturing processes. As a result, students often opt for the simplest solution. Students receive regular feedback; it is detailed and students are clear about how to improve their work. They do not visit museums or learn enough about modern designers to stimulate them to consider more ambitious projects.
207. The curriculum places too little emphasis on design and on the use of new materials and technologies, for example, a wider range of plastics and composite materials. The range of ICT in the department is limited in both its capacity and the quality of software available; CAD/CAM, digital cameras, videos and graphic presentations do not feature enough. The accommodation is dated and unexciting. Nevertheless, the subject is becoming increasingly popular and numbers have grown.

### **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS AND MEDIA**

The focus was on media studies. Art and design, music technology and drama were sampled.

#### **Art and design**

208. Standards are very high, exemplified by students' sketchbooks where, for example, they explored and developed a 'Sense of place project' very well. In the two lessons observed, teaching was very good, with good demonstrations and probing questions that made students think around the topic. Teachers assess work very well, providing detailed targets for students. Retention is very good, and all Year 13 students intend to continue with art-related subjects. Students, however, do not have a study area for art, which seriously affects their ability to continue with their artwork outside lessons.

#### **Music technology**

209. This is a new course in Year 12. Teaching and learning are very good despite the barely satisfactory resources and accommodation. Students' performance work is in line with expectations and they regularly give performances,

with energy and vigour. The standard of classwork is slightly below national expectations; this represents good achievement as students started with no knowledge of music technology. The teachers have very good subject knowledge and use the newly-acquired studio recording equipment well; students know how to use microphones effectively to record and amplify a range of different performance styles. In their compositions, they manipulate sampled material to create textures and harmonies. They use a mixing desk effectively to enhance performances and use sequencing software well to compose and arrange.

## Drama

210. A-level results in 2003 were below average but standards have improved and are now in line with expectations. Students achieve very well. All sixth form teaching is very good and has some excellent features. In a lesson based on Ibsen's *The Dolls House*, students performed with sensitivity and created some thought-provoking scenes. There are many opportunities for performance in the sixth form - a great strength within the school. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, although they are not good enough if the full potential of students' performance is to be realised.

## Media studies

Provision in media studies is **excellent**.

Standards are very high	Students achieve exceptionally well
Teaching is excellent	Learning is excellent
Leadership is excellent	Management is very good
Improvement since the last inspection has been excellent	

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head of department provides inspiring leadership to students and staff, particularly by her own excellent teaching.
- The subject's popularity has grown very fast.
- All teaching is very good and mostly excellent, if the overall judgement is correct.

## Commentary

211. Students' attainment is exceptional, representing excellent progress and achievement, both across the period of the whole course and in individual lessons. The number of students achieving the highest A-level grades of A and B is nearly double the national average and work seen in lessons shows that standards continue to improve. In lessons, students discuss and consider issues of gender stereotyping in situation comedy and apply these effectively to notions in critical theory. They create imaginative storyboards and think thorough production challenges very well. Presentation of coursework is high - reflected in the examination results.
212. All teaching contains some excellent features. Students learn exceptionally well in individual lessons because teachers set high challenge and excellent pace. They use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively and successfully to support students' learning and they ask stimulating and probing questions in a way that continually moves students forward to higher levels. They discuss issues, for example, political bias or gender, with academic rigour combined with sensitivity. In the best lessons, relationships are excellent because the students value the teacher's expertise, clarity and the level of challenge and support. Excellent teaching is characterised by the continuous achievement of consecutive, small but challenging steps, so students make excellent progress.
213. The head of department inspires teachers and students to make excellent progress and models excellent teaching on a daily basis. Her management of the department shows examples of excellent practice. The use of data to create individual intervention plans and the effort that is put into writing home, to ensure the completion of work and to praise good work, is particularly effective. Students know exactly where they are in terms of their attainment and exactly what they need to do to improve. The growth in the popularity of this subject is a success story and is the result of the inspiring leadership given by the head of department. Four years ago, only five students took the subject for A-level - in the present academic year, there are 55 following the AS course and 23 studying for A-level.

## HOSPITALITY, SPORTS, LEISURE AND TRAVEL

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

Standards are above average	Students achieve well
Teaching is good	Learning is good
Leadership is very good	Management is very good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The introduction of a highly appropriate vocational course for lower-attaining students who are interested in sport has been successful.
- Teachers work hard to ensure that students keep up-to-date with their course work.

### Commentary

214. BTEC sports studies, part 1, was introduced as a vocational sixth form subject in September 2004. The course has proved popular and has begun very well. Students in Year 12 are achieving above average standards. Most of them have gained merits in their first assignments. Students are making good and sometimes very good progress related to their well below average GCSE examination results. Students show a keen interest in the subject. They quickly acquire new knowledge and increase their understanding of sports studies. Many attain high standards when performing their own focus sports. Their very positive attitudes and their very good relationships with one another and their teachers is a major factor in their overall good achievement. One boy at an early stage of learning English is working at distinction level. A few students find it difficult to meet coursework deadlines and teachers are providing much support to help them stay motivated and working productively.
215. Teaching is shared amongst three members of the department. Very good organisation and planning ensure that each unit of work is taught by a subject specialist. Teachers plan for a wide range of activities and it is the variety and practical elements that motivate and challenge students. When learning about leadership skills, students work well in small groups to plan and organise activities. Students are expected to word process their assignments, learn how to handle statistics and make effective use of the Internet for independent research purposes; teachers are guiding them towards these skills very well.
216. The breakdown of the assignment criteria sheets is not always detailed enough for students to fully understand how to record their findings. Students are given many opportunities to draft and redraft their work as a result of their teachers' thorough feedback. The theory room is well equipped with ten computers, and the informative display helps students to understand course planning and requirements. The department has made a good link with another school which offers the course; the exchange of ideas and confirmation of standards is very beneficial to teachers and students.

## BUSINESS

Provision in business is **very good**.

Standards are average	Students achieve well
Teaching is very good	Learning is good
Leadership is excellent	Management is excellent
Improvement since the last inspection has been very good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The excellent leadership and management support a highly effective and hardworking team of well-qualified young teachers.
- Standards are rising overall, although not the percentage of the highest grades.
- The vocational course is well matched to students' needs.
- Assessment and feedback for students have improved greatly, although students do not always understand precisely how to improve their work.
- At present, students do not learn enough about real life business problems, including global business.

## Commentary

217. The AVCE single and double results have improved over the past three years. Less than 30 per cent passed in 2002, but 90 per cent in 2004, although few students attained the highest grades of A or B. In the Year 12 GNVQ intermediate, 45 per cent of students passed in 2004. Standards in lessons are above average. Even students experiencing some early difficulties with the subject achieve well and standards improve by Year 13.
218. By the end of Year 12, students have developed a strong subject knowledge base on which to build. They understand complex business concepts well and apply these to more difficult business problems with growing competence. They learn to apply analytical techniques to help strategic decision making. Students, especially those of higher ability, enjoy developing their skills in critical analysis and evaluating a range of evidence. This was well exemplified in a Year 13 lesson using market research analysis to determine how businesses might respond to a rapidly changing external environment.
219. Students do better at coursework because they do not always understand what is required of them in examination questions, and how to raise their grades. The introduction of the new individual record tracking system and target setting will go some way to assist them. Provision for students at an early stage of learning English is good: after successful pilots in Year 11, the department is introducing specific ways to help raise these students' standards.
220. Some teaching is excellent, the result of the teachers' very good up-to-date subject knowledge, excellent communication skills and enthusiasm, combined with very well structured lessons and rich lesson content which students find stimulating and challenging. Students recognise and appreciate the quality of the teaching they receive and are well motivated – many are very keen to go on into higher education. Teachers use a rich variety of resources very well, including PowerPoint presentations, the interactive whiteboard, video clips, the Intranet and relevant case studies, and select examination questions to match students' abilities.
221. Teachers ask excellent questions, they are probing, create a real sense of momentum and bring even the driest parts of the curriculum to life. Consequently, students learn well, extend their skills of analysis into new areas and consolidate their understanding. Teachers mark work thoroughly and accurately, using the new monitoring frame for feedback so students understand their strengths and weaknesses.
222. The new head of department combines a sense of purpose, direction and vision which is re-energising the faculty. Business studies is an increasingly popular subject. The head of department has accurately identified the key priorities and introduced strategies to address them; they are already having an impact on standards. In addition to up-to-date textbooks, videos and excellent use of ICT, new, more relevant schemes of work, lesson plans and assessment frameworks are being developed. An A-level economics course is being piloted this year and the GNVQ programme is to be revisited. Links with business, such as those in the City and the wider business community, are underdeveloped.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

*Inspection judgement* *Sixth form grade* *School grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the sixth form and the school</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is		1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2	2
Cost effectiveness of the sixth form / value for money provided by the school	3	3

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>		<b>3</b>
Students' achievement	3	3

<b>Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>		<b>2</b>
Attendance	3	3
Attitudes	2	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2	3
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>		<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	3	3
How well students learn	3	3
The quality of assessment	3	3
How well the curriculum meets students' needs	3	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities		3
Accommodation and resources	4	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety		1
Support, advice and guidance for students	2	2
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents		3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>		<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	3	3
The leadership of the headteacher		1
The leadership of other key staff	3	3
The effectiveness of management	2	2

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*